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THE

LETTERS

OF

PLINY THE CONSUL.

WITH OCCASIONAL REMARKS.

BY WILLIAM MELMOTH, ESQ.

VOL. I.

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THE PREFACE.

PLINY may be considered in these Letters as writing his own memoirs; every epistle is a kind of *historical sketch*, wherein we have a view of him in some striking attitude, either of active or contemplative life. And if that were his real design in their publication, he could not, it should seem, have taken a more agreeable, or, perhaps, a more modest method of transmitting himself to posterity. To enter, therefore, into a *detail* concerning him, would be only anticipating the author himself, and amusing the reader with a copy, while the original stands before him. Nothing seems requisite to be farther added to the piece, than just to mark the date. PLINY was born in the reign of NERO,

about the eight hundred and fifteenth year of Rome, and the sixty-second of the Christian era. As to the time of his death, antiquity has given us no information; but it is conjectured, he died either a little before, or soon after, the decease of that excellent prince, the admirable TRAJAN; that is, about the year of Christ one hundred and sixteen.

The elegance of this author's *manner* adds force to the most interesting, at the same time that it enlivens the most common subjects. But the polite and spirited turn of these letters is by no means their principal recommendation; they receive a much higher value, as they exhibit one of the most amiable and exemplary characters in all antiquity. PLINY'S whole life seems to have been employed in the exercise of every generous and social virtue. To forward modest merit, to encourage ingenious talents, to vindicate oppressed innocence, are some of the glorious purposes to which he devoted his power, his fortune, and his

abilities. But how does he rise in our esteem and admiration, when we see him exerting (with a grace that discovers his humanity as well as his politeness) the noblest acts both of public and private munificence, not so much from the abundance of his wealth, as the wisdom of his economy?

What a celebrated ancient has observed concerning the style of the famous Grecian painter TIMANTHES, is applicable to that of PLINY: "*Intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur;*" his meaning is generally much fuller than his expression. This, as it heightens the difficulty of his interpreter's task, so it necessarily gives great scope to an objector. But in *drawing* after these excellent masters of antiquity, the most successful are only, perhaps, the most excusable; as those who have the truest taste of their works, will least expect to see the strength and spirit of them fully preserved in a copy. This, however, is not mentioned as claiming indulgence to any errors

in the present attempt; on the contrary, they are willingly resigned to just correction. A true critic is a kind of *censor* in the republic of letters; and none who wish well to its interests, would desire to suppress or restrain his office. The translator, at least, has received too much advantage in the course of this performance, from the animadversions of some of the best judges in both languages, not to value that enlightening art, wherever it may be exercised with the same accurate and candid spirit.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK FIRST.

LETTER I.

TO SEPTITIUS.

YOU have frequently pressed me to make a select collection of my Letters, (if, in truth, there be any which deserve a preference) and give them to the public. I have selected them accordingly; not, indeed, in their proper order of time, for I was not compiling a history; but just as they presented themselves to my hands. And now I have only to wish that you may have no reason to repent of your advice, nor I of my compliance: in that case, I may probably inquire after the rest, which at present lie neglected, and preserve those I shall hereafter write. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO ARIANUS.

I FORESEE your journey hither is likely to be delayed, and, therefore, send you the speech

which I promised in my former; requesting you, as usual, to revise and correct it. I desire this, the more earnestly, as I never, I think, in any of my former speeches, attempted the same style of composition; for I have endeavoured to imitate your old favourite Demosthenes, and Calvus, who is lately become mine. When I say this, I mean only with respect to their *manner*; for, to catch their sublime *spirit*, is given, alone, to the inspired *few*. My subject, indeed, seemed naturally to lead me to this (may I venture to call it?) emulation; as it was, in general, of such a nature as demanded all the thunder of eloquence, even to a degree sufficient to have awakened (if it be possible) that indolence, in which I havelong reposed. I have not, however, neglected the softer graces of my admired Tully, wherever I could, with propriety, step out of my direct road, to enjoy a more flowery path: for, it was warmth, not austerity, at which I aimed. I would not have you imagine, by this, that I am bespeaking your indulgence: on the contrary, to induce you to exercise the utmost severity of your criticism, I will confess, that neither my friends nor myself are averse from the publication of this piece, if *you* should join with us in giving the same partial vote. The truth is, as I must publish something, I wish (and it is the wish, I confess, of indolence) it might be this performance rather than any other, merely because it is already finished. At all events, however, something I must publish, and for many reasons; chiefly, because the tracts which I have

already sent into the world, though they have long since lost all their recommendation from novelty, are still, I am told, in request; if, indeed, the booksellers do not flatter me. And let them; since, by that innocent deceit, I am encouraged to pursue my studies. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO CANINUS RUFUS.

HOW stands Comum,* that favourite scene of yours and mine? What becomes of the pleasant villa, the vernal portico, the shady plane-tree-walk, the crystal canal, so agreeably winding along its flowery banks, together with the charming lake† below, which serves, at once, the purposes of use and beauty? What have you to tell me of the firm yet soft gestatio,‡ the sunny bath, the public saloon, the private dining-room, and all the elegant apartments for repose, both at noon § and night? Do these possess my friend, and divide his time with pleasing vicissitude? Or

* The city where Pliny was born: it still subsists, and is now called *Como*, situated upon the lake Larius, or *Lago di Como*, in the duchy of Milan.

† The lake Larius, upon the banks of which this villa was situated.

‡ A piece of ground set apart for the purpose of exercising, either on horseback, or in their vehicles; it was generally contiguous to their gardens, and laid out in the form of a circus.

§ It was customary among the Romans to sleep in the middle of the day; and they had apartments for that purpose distinct from their bedchambers.

do the affairs of the world, as usual, call him frequently from this agreeable retreat? If the scene of your enjoyments lies wholly there, you are happy: if not, you are under the common error of mankind. But leave, my friend, (for certainly it is time) the sordid pursuits of life to others, and devote yourself, in this calm and undisturbed recess, entirely to pleasures of the studious kind. Let these employ your idle as well as serious hours; let them be, at once, your business and your amusement; the subjects of your waking and even sleeping thoughts: produce something that shall be really and for ever your own. All your other possessions will pass from one master to another: *this* alone, when once yours, will remain yours for ever. As I well know the temper and genius of him to whom I am addressing myself, I must exhort you to think of your abilities as they deserve; do justice to those excellent talents you possess, and the world, believe me, will certainly do so too. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO POMPEIA CELERINA.

YOU might perceive, by my last short letter, I had no occasion for yours, to inform me of the various conveniencies you enjoy at your several villas. The elegant accommodations which are to be found at Narnia,* Ocriculum,† Carso-

* Now called Narni, a city in Ombria, in the duchy of Spoleto.

† Otricoli, in the same duchy.

la,‡ Perusia,§ particularly the pretty bath at Narnia, I am extremely well acquainted with. The fact is, I have a property in every thing which belongs to you; and I know of no other difference between your house and my own, than that I am more carefully attended in the former than the latter. You may, perhaps, have occasion to make the same observation in your turn, whenever you shall give me your company here; and I wish for it, not only that you may partake of *mine* with the same ease and freedom that I do of *yours*, but to awaken the industry of my domestics, who are grown somewhat careless in their attendance upon me. A long course of mild treatment is apt to wear out the impressions of awe in servants; whereas, new faces quicken their diligence, and they are generally more inclined to please their master by attentions to his guest, than to himself. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO VOCONIUS ROMANUS.

DID you ever see a more abject and mean-spirited creature than Regulus has appeared since the death of Domitian; during whose reign his conduct was no less infamous, though more concealed, than under Nero's? He has lately expressed some apprehensions of my resentment: and, indeed, he has reason; for I look upon him with the utmost indignation. He not only promoted the prosecution against Rusticus Arulenus, but

‡ Carsola, in the same duchy. § Perugia, in Tuscany.

exulted in his death; insomuch, that he actually recited and published a libel upon his memory, wherein he styles him, *the stoic's ape:* adding, that "he was *stigmated** by the wound he received in the cause of Vitellius:" such is the strain of his eloquence! He fell so furiously upon the

* The impropriety of this expression, in the original, seems to lie in the word *stigmosum*, which Regulus, probably, either coined through affectation, or used through ignorance. It is a word, at least, which does not occur in any author of authority: The translator has endeavoured, therefore, to preserve the same sort of impropriety, by using an expression of the like unwarranted stamp.

It is observable how careful the Romans were of preserving the purity of their language. It seems even to have been a point which they thought worthy the attention of the state itself; for, we find the Cumeans not daring to make use of the Latin language in their public acts, without having first obtained leave in *form*:* And Tiberius, himself, would not hazard the word *monopolium*, in the senate, without making an excuse for employing a foreign term.† Seneca gives it as a certain maxim, that wherever a general false taste in style and expression prevails, it is an infallible sign of a corruption of manners in that people: a liberty of introducing obsolete words, or forming new ones, is a mark, he thinks, of an equal licentiousness of the moral kind.‡. Accordingly, it is observed,|| there is scarce more than eight or ten instances of new words can be produced from the most approved Roman writers, in the course of two or three centuries. It is possible, however, a delicacy of this sort may be carried too far; and, in fact, we find some of their best writers complaining of the poverty of their language;§ notwithstanding, Tully has ventured to assert it was more copious than the Greek.**

* *Liv.* 1. 40. *c.* 42. † *Suet. in Tib. c.* 71.
‡ *Ep.* 114. || *Sanad. sur Hor.*
§ *Lucr.* 1. 332. *Quintil.* 8. 3. *Plin. Ep.* 13. 1. 4.
** *De Fin.* l. 1. *sub init.*

character of Herennius Senecio, who was capitally convicted upon the information of Metius Carus, that the latter said to him, one day, *Pray, what business have you with my dead men? Did I ever interfere in the affair of Crassus, or Camerinus?* These, you know, were victims to Regulus, in Nero's time. For these reasons, he imagines I am highly exasperated; and, therefore, when he recited his last piece, did not give me an invitation. Besides, he has not forgotten, it seems, the dangerous snare he once laid for me, when he and I were pleading before the centumviri.* Rusticus had desired me to be counsel for Arionilla, Timon's wife: Regulus was engaged against her. In the course of my defence, I strongly insisted upon a decree which had been formerly made by the worthy Modestus, at that time banished by Domitian. Now behold Regulus in his true colours: "Pray," says he, "what are your sentiments "of Modestus?" You will easily judge how extremely hazardous it would have been to have answered in his favour, and how infamous if the reverse. But some guardian power, I am persuad-

* A select body of men who formed a court of judicature, called the centumviral court. Their jurisdiction extended chiefly, if not entirely, to questions concerning wills and intestate estates; for, though Tully, in his first book de Oratore, enumerates other points which came in question before them, yet Pitiscus* is of opinion (and with great probability) that, in latter times, their business was singly confined to the cases first mentioned. Their number, as appears by our author, amounted to 180.

* *Lex. in verb.*

ed, assisted me in this emergency. "I would tell "you my sentiments," I said, "if that were a mat- "ter for the consideration of the centumviri." Still he repeated his question. I replied, "It "was not customary to examine witnesses to the "character of a man, after sentence had passed "upon him." He pressed me a third time: "*I* "*do not inquire*," said he, "*what you think of Mo-* "*destus in general; I only ask your opinion of his* "*loyalty.*"—"Since you will have my sentiments, "then," I returned, "*I think it illegal even to ask* "*a question concerning a person who stands con-* "*victed.*" This silenced him; and I was univer- sally applauded and congratulated, that, without wounding my character by an advantageous, per- haps, though ungenerous answer, I had not entan- gled myself in so insidious a snare. Regulus, conscious of this unworthy treatment, has solicited Cœcilius Celer, and Fabius Justus, to use their interest to bring about a reconciliation between us. And, lest this should not be sufficient, he has applied also to Spurinna for the same purpose; to whom he came in the humblest manner, (for he is the most abject creature living, where he has any thing to fear) and entreated him to call upon me very early the next morning, and endeavour, by any means, to soften my resentment; "for," says he, "I can no longer support myself under this "anxiety of mind." Accordingly, I was awak- ened, the following day, with a message from Spu- rinna, informing me that he would wait upon me. I sent word back, I would call upon *him*; how-

ever, both of us mutually setting out to pay this visit, we met under Livia's portico. He acquainted me with the commission he had received from Regulus, and interceded for him, as became so worthy a man in behalf of one of a very different character, without greatly pressing the thing. I ought not, I said, to conceal from him the true state of the case, and after I should have informed him, I would leave it to himself to consider what answer was proper for me to return. "But, I cannot positively," I added, "determine any thing till Mauricus* *(who was then in exile)* shall return, by whose sentiments I think myself obliged to be entirely guided in this affair." A few days after, Regulus met me as I was attending upon the prætor, and calling me aside, said, he was afraid I deeply resented an expression he had once made use of, in his reply to me and Satrius Rufus, before the centumviri, to this purpose: *Rufus and that other, who affects to rival* Tully, *and to despise the eloquence of our age.* I answered, that now, indeed, I perceived he spoke it with a sneer, since he owned he meant it so; otherwise it might have passed for a compliment. I was free to own, I said, that I endeavoured to imitate Cicero, and was, by no means, contented with taking my example from modern eloquence; for I looked upon it as a very absurd thing not to copy the best models of every kind. But, "how happens it," continued I, "that you, who remember so well

* Brother to Rusticus Arulenus, who had been put to death upon the information of this Regulus.

what passed upon this occasion, should have forgotten that other, when you pushed me so strongly concerning the loyalty of Modestus?" Confounded by this unexpected question, pallid as he always is, he turned still paler. After a good deal of hesitation, he said, it was not at me he aimed; it was only at Modestus. Observe now, I beseech you, the implacable spirit of this fellow, who was not ashamed thus to confess himself capable of insulting the unfortunate. But the reason he gave, in justification of this infamous proceeding, is pleasant. "He wrote," said he, "in a certain letter, which was read to Domitian, that I was the most execrable of all scoundrels:" and the character Modestus gave of him was the truth, beyond all manner of controversy. Here, I think, I broke off the conversation, being desirous to reserve to myself the liberty of acting as I should see proper, when Mauricus returns. It is no easy matter, I well know, to destroy Regulus; he is rich, and at the head of a party; there are many with whom he has credit,* and more that are afraid of him: a passion that will sometimes prevail even beyond

* There seems to have been a cast of uncommon blackness in the character of this Regulus; otherwise the benevolent Pliny would scarce have singled him out, as he has in this and some following letters, for the object of his warmest contempt and indignation. Yet, infamous as he appears to have been, he was not, it seems, without his flatterers and admirers; and a contemporary poet frequently represents him as one of the most finished characters of the age, both in eloquence and virtue; particularly in the following epigram, occasioned by his escape from an imminent danger.

friendship itself. But, after all, ties of this sort are not so strong, but they may be loosened; and the popularity of a bad man is no more to be de-

Itur ad Herculei gelidas qua Tiburis arces,
Canaque sulphureis Albula fumat aquis;
Rura nemusque sacrum, dilectaque jugera Musis,
Signat vicina quartus ab urbe lapis:
Hic rudis æstivas præstabat Porticus umbras;
Heu quam pæne novum Porticus ausa nefas!
Nam subito collapsa ruit, cum mole sub illa
Gestatus bijugis Regulus esset equis.
Nimirum timuit nostras Fortuna querelas,
Quæ par tam magnæ non erat invidiæ.
Nunc et damna juvant; sunt ipsa pericula tanti:
Stantia non poterant tecta probare Deos.

MART. Lib. 1. Ep. 13.

Where leads the way to Tybur's shady towers,
And snow-white Albula sulphureous pours,
A villa stands, from Rome a little space;
And every muse delights to haunt the place.
Here once a *Portic* lent her cooling shade;
Alas! how near to impious guilt betrayed!
Sudden it fell; what time the steeds convey
Safe from her nodding walls great Regulus away.
To crush that head, not even Fortune dared,
And the world's general indignation feared.
Blest be the ruin, be the danger blest!
The *standing* pile had ne'er the gods confest.

But poets, especially needy ones, such as we know Martial was, are not generally the most faithful painters in this way; and of the two copies of Regulus now before us, there can be no doubt which most resembled the original. If antiquity had delivered down to us more of these drawings of the same persons by different hands, the truth of characters might be easier ascertained, and many of those, which we now view with high admiration, would greatly sink, *perhaps*, in our esteem; as we must have conceived a very favourable idea of Regulus, if we

pended upon than he is himself. However (to repeat it again) I shall do nothing in this affair till Mauricus returns. He is a man of sound judgment and great sagacity, formed upon long experience, and who, from his observations on the past, well knows how to judge of the future. I shall consult with him, and think myself justified either in pursuing or dropping this affair, as he shall advise. In the meanwhile, I thought I owed this account to that friendship which subsists between us, and gives you an undoubted right to be informed, not only of all my actions, but all my designs. Farewell.

LETTER. VI.

TO CORNELIUS TACITUS.

CERTAINLY you will laugh (and laugh you may) when I tell you, that your old acquaintance is turned sportsman, and has captured three noble boars. What! (you will say with astonishment) Pliny!—*Even he.* However, I indulged, at the same time, my beloved inactivity; and, whilst I sat at my nets, you would have found me, not with my spear, but my pencil and tablet by my side. I mused and wrote, being resolved, if I returned with my hands empty, at least to come

had never seen his picture but from Martial's pencil. Even Horace himself, we find giving a very different *air* to his Lollius,* from that in which he is represented by Paterculus.†

* *Lib.* 4. *Od.* 9. † *Lib.* 2. 102.

home with my memorandums full. Believe me, this manner of studying is not to be despised: you cannot conceive how greatly exercise contributes to enliven the imagination. There is, besides, something in the solemnity of the venerable woods with which one is surrounded, together with that profound silence* which is observed on these occasions, that strongly inclines the mind to meditation. For the future, therefore, let me advise you, whenever you hunt, to take along with you your pencil and tablets, as well as your basket and bottle: for be assured you will find Minerva as fond of traversing the hills as Diana. Farewell.

* By the circumstance of *silence*, here mentioned, as well as by the whole air of this letter, it is plain the hunting here recommended was of a very different kind from what is practised amongst us. It is probable the wild boars were allured into their nets by some kind of prey, with which they were baited, while the sportsman watched at a distance, in silence and concealment. Something, at least, of this manner is here plainly implied, and is necessary to be hinted to the English reader, in order to his conceiving the propriety of Pliny's sentiment, which otherwise must seem absurd. This, perhaps, was their usual method of hunting in summer; as driving these animals into toils, by the assistance of hounds, is mentioned by Horace as a winter exercise:

—Cum tonantis annus hibernus Jovis
Imbres nivesque comparat,
Trudit acres hinc et hinc multa cane
Apros in obstantes plagas. EPOD. ii.

——When rain and snows appear,
And wintry Jove loud thunders o'er the year,
With hounds he drives into the toils,
The foaming boar.—— Mr. FRANCIS.

LETTER VII.

TO OCTAVIUS RUFUS.

SEE to what an exalted station you have raised me! You have even invested me with a sovereignty equal to that which Homer attributes to his mighty Jove:

> From Heaven's imperial, Jove heard his prayer,
> Part he admits, and scatters part in air.*

'Tis thus, with a *nod* or a *frown*, I may grant or reject your petition as I see proper. To be serious, as I am at liberty, I think, to excuse myself to the Bætici,† especially at your request, from being their advocate against a single individual; so, on the other hand, to oppose a whole province, which I have long since attached to me by many good offices, and spared no pains to oblige, even at the hazard of my own interest, would be acting inconsistently with my honour, and that uniformity of conduct which I know you admire. I shall steer, therefore, in this affair, a middle course, and, of the alternatives which you propose to me, choose that which will satisfy your judgment, as well as your inclination. For I do not look upon myself obliged to consider so much what you at present desire, as what a man of your worthy character will *always* approve. I hope to be at

* Iliad. xvi. ver. 250.

† The people of Bætica, a part of Spain comprehending Andalusia and Granada.

Rome about the 15th of October, when we will join our united credit with Gallus, in convincing him of the reasonableness of my offer. In the mean while, you may assure him of my good disposition towards him :

——— The sire of men and gods,
With gracious aspect mild, complianee nods.†

For why should I not continue to quote Homer's verses, since you will not put it in my power to quote any of yours ? which yet I so passionately wish for, that I question whether I could withstand such a bribe, even to plead against my old clients, the good people of Bætica. I had almost forgotten to mention (what, however, is of too much importance to be omitted) that I have received the excellent dates you sent me. They are likely to prove very powerful rivals to my favourite figs and morells. Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO POMPEIUS SATURNINUS.

NOTHING could be more seasonable than the letter I received from you, wherein you desire me to communicate to you some of my compositions : I was at that very time designing to send you one. Your request, therefore, has forwarded my intentions, and freed me from every thing that I had to apprehend either from your

† Iliad. 1. v. 518.

refusal of this trouble, or my scruples to give it you. Without hesitation, then, I make use of your offer, as you must now take the consequence of it without reluctance. But you must not expect from a man of my indolence any thing new. On the contrary, I am going to entreat you to revise again the speech I made to my countrymen, when I dedicated the public library which I founded for their use. You have already, I remember, obliged me with some remarks upon this piece: I now beg of you, not only to take a general view of the whole, but distinctly to criticise it, with your usual accuracy, in all its parts. When you have corrected it, I shall still be at liberty either to publish or suppress it: and the delay, in the mean time, will be attended with one of these alternatives; for, while we are deliberating whether it is fit for the public view, a frequent revisal will either make it so, or convince me that it is not. Though, indeed, the principal difficulty with me concerning the publication of this harangue, does not arise so much from the composition itself, as from the subject, which has something in it, I fear, that will look like ostentation. For, be the style ever so plain and unornamented, yet, as the occasion necessarily led me to speak not only of the munificence of my ancestors, but of my own; my modesty will be greatly embarrassed. A dangerous and slippery situation this, even when one is led into it, by a plea of necessity! For, if mankind are not very favourable to panegyric, even when given us by others; how

much more difficult is it to reconcile them to it, when it is a tribute which we pay to ourselves or to our ancestors? Honourable actions, though stripped of all external advantages, are generally the object of envy, but particularly so, when glory is her attendant; and the world is never so little disposed to detract from the rectitude of your conduct, as when it passes unobserved and unapplauded. For these reasons, I frequently ask myself, whether I composed this harangue, such as it is, merely from a personal consideration, or with a view also to the public; and I am sensible, that what may be exceedingly expedient and proper in the prosecution of any affair, may lose all its grace and fitness the moment the business is completed: for instance, in the case before us, nothing could be more to my purpose than to explain at large the motives of my intended bounty; for, by this means, I accustomed my mind to generous sentiments; grew more enamoured of the lovely forms by frequent attention to them; and guarded, at the same time, against that repentance, which usually attends a hasty execution of liberalities not well considered. There arose, also, a farther advantage from this method, as it fixed in me a certain habitual contempt of money. For, while mankind seem to be universally governed by an innate passion to accumulate wealth; the cultivation of a more generous affection in my own breast, taught me to emancipate myself from the slavery of so predominant a principle: And I thought my honest intentions would be the

more meritorious, as they should appear to proceed, not from a sudden start of munificence, but from the dictates of cool and deliberate reflection. I considered, besides, the nature of my designs; I was not engaging myself to exhibit public games or gladiatorial combats, but to establish an annual fund for the support and education of ingenious youths. The pleasures of the senses are so far from wanting the oratorial arts to recommend them, that we stand in need of all the powers of eloquence, to moderate and restrain their influence. But to prevail with those who are capable of the office, to undertake with cheerfulness the disagreeable business of education; it is necessary to apply, in the most artful manner, not only to their interest, but their passions. If physicians find it expedient to use the most insinuating address in recommending to their patients a wholesome, though, perhaps, unpleasant regimen; how much more occasion had *he* to exert all the powers of persuasion, who, out of regard to the public welfare, was endeavouring to reconcile it to a most useful, though not very popular benefaction? particularly, as my aim was to recommend an institution, calculated solely for the benefit of those who were parents, to men, who, at present, had no children; and to persuade the greater number patiently to wait till they should be entitled to an honour, of which a *few* only could immediately partake. But as at that time, when I attempted to explain and enforce the design and benefit of my institution, I considered more the general

good of my countrymen, than any reputation which might result to myself; so I am apprehensive, if I should publish this piece, it will seem as if I had a view rather to my own glory, than to the benefit of others. I am very sensible how much nobler it is to place the reward of virtue in the silent approbation of one's own breast, than in the applause of the world. Fame ought to be the consequence, not the motive of our actions; and though it should happen not to attend the worthy deed, yet is it by no means the less meritorious for having missed the applause it deserved. But the world is apt to suspect, that those, who celebrate their own beneficent acts, performed them for no other motive than to have the pleasure of extolling them. Thus, the splendour of an action, which would have been deemed illustrious if related by another, is totally extinguished when it becomes the subject of one's own applause. Such is the disposition of mankind, if they cannot blast the action, they will censure the vanity; and whether you do what does not deserve particular notice, or set forth yourself what does, either way you incur reproach. In my own case, there is a peculiar circumstance that weighs much with me. This speech was delivered not before a general assembly of the people of Rome, but the Decurii;* not in the forum, but a municipal assembly; I doubt, therefore, it will appear inconsistent that I, who, when I spoke it, seemed to endeavour to avoid

* The Decurii were a sort of senators in the municipal or corporate cities of Italy.

popular applause, should now, by publishing this performance, appear to court it: that I, who was so scrupulous as not to admit even those persons to be present when I pronounced this discourse, who were interested in my benefaction, lest it might be suspected I was actuated in this affair by any ambitious views; should now seem to solicit admiration, by forwardly displaying it to such as have no other concern in my munificence, than the benefit of example. These are the scruples which have occasioned my delaying to give this piece to the public; but I submit them entirely to your judgment, which I shall ever esteem as a sufficient sanction of my conduct. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO MINUTIUS FUNDANUS.

WHEN one considers how the time passes at Rome, one cannot but be surprised, that, take any single day, and it either is, or at least seems to be, spent reasonably enough; and yet, upon casting up the whole sum, the amount will appear quite otherwise. Ask any one, how he has been employed to-day? He will tell you, perhaps, "I have "been at the ceremony of investing the *manly* "*robe*;* *this* friend invited me to a wedding; *that*

* The Roman youths, at the age of seventeen, changed their habit, and took up the *toga virilis*, or manly gown; upon which occasion they were conducted, by the friends of the family, with great ceremony, either into the forum or capitol, and there invested with this new robe.

"desired me to attend the hearing of his cause; "*one* begged me to be witness to his will; *ano*- "*ther* called me to a consultation." These are offices, which seem, while one is engaged in them, extremely necessary; and yet, when, in the silence of retirement, we look back upon the many hours thus employed, we cannot but condemn them as solemn impertinences. At such a season one is apt to reflect, *How much of my life has been spent in trifles!* At least, it is a reflection which frequently occurs to me at Laurentum, after I have been employing myself in my studies, or even in the necessary care of the animal machine (for the body must be repaired and supported, if we would preserve the mind in all its vigour.) In that peaceful retreat, I neither hear nor speak any thing of which I have occasion to repent. I suffer none to repeat to me the whispers of slander; nor do I censure any man, unless myself, when I am dissatisfied with my compositions. *There* I live undisturbed by rumour, and free from the anxious solicitudes of hope or fear, conversing only with myself and my books. True and genuine life! pleasing and honourable repose! More, perhaps, to be desired than employments of any kind! Thou solemn sea and solitary shore, best and most retired scene for contemplation, with how many noble thoughts have ye inspired me! Snatch then, my friend, as I have, the first occasion of leaving the noisy town, with all its frivolous pursuits, and devote your days to study, or even resign them to indolence; for, as my inge-

nious friend Attilius pleasantly said, "It is better "to have nothing to do, than to be *doing* nothing." Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO ATRIUS CLEMENS.

IF ever polite literature flourished at Rome, it certainly flourishes now; and I could give you many eminent instances: I will content myself, however, with naming only Euphrates, the philosopher. I first became acquainted with this excellent person in my youth, when I served in the army of Syria. I had an opportunity of conversing with him familiarly, and took some pains to gain his affection: though that, indeed, was nothing difficult, for he is exceedingly open to access, and actuated by those social principles he professes to teach. I should think myself extremely happy if I had as fully answered the expectations he, at that time, conceived of me, as he exceeds every thing I had imagined of him. But, perhaps, I admire his excellencies more now, than I did then, because I know better how to appreciate them; if I can with truth say, I yet know. For, as none but those who are skilled in painting, statuary, or the plastic art, can form a right judgment of any performance in those respective modes of representation, so a man must, himself, have made great advances in philosophy, before he is capable of forming a just opinion of a philosopher. However, as far as I am qualified to

determine, Euphrates is possessed of so many shining talents, that he cannot fail to strike the most injudicious observer. He reasons with much force, acuteness, and elegance; and frequently rises into all the sublime and luxuriant eloquence of Plato. His style is rich and flowing, and, at the same time, so wonderfully captivating, that he forces the reluctant attention of the most unwilling hearer. His outward appearance is agreeable to all the rest; a fine stature, a comely aspect, long hair, and a large silver beard: circumstances which, though they may probably be thought trifling and accidental, contribute, however, to gain him much reverence. There is no affected negligence in his habit; his countenance is grave, but not austere; and his approach commands respect, without creating awe. Distinguished as he is by the sanctity of his manners, he is no less so by his polite and affable address. He points his eloquence against the vices, not the persons of mankind; and, without severity, reclaims the wanderer from the paths of virtue. His exhortations so captivate your attention, that you hang, as it were, upon his lips; and even after the heart is convinced, the ear still wishes to listen to the harmonious reasoner. His family consists of three children, (two of which are sons) whom he educates with the utmost care. His father-in-law, Pompeius Julianus, as he greatly distinguished himself in every other part of his life, so particularly in this, that, though he was himself of the highest rank in his province, yet,

among many considerable competitors for his daughter, he preferred Euphrates, as first in merit, though not in dignity. But to dwell any longer upon the virtues of a man, whose conversation I am so unfortunate as not to have leisure sufficiently to enjoy; what would it avail but to increase my regret? My time is wholly taken up in the execution of a very honourable, indeed, but very troublesome employment; in hearing causes, answering petitions, passing accounts, and writing letters;—but letters, alas! where genius has no share. I sometimes complain to Euphrates (for I have leisure at least to *complain*) of these unpleasing occupations. He endeavours to comfort me, by affirming, that to be engaged in the service of the public, to hear and determine causes, to explain the laws, and administer justice, is a part, and the noblest part too, of philosophy; as it is reducing to practice what her professors teach in speculation. It may be so: but that it is as *agreeable* as to spend whole days in attending to his useful conversation, even *his* rhetoric will never be able to convince me. I cannot, therefore, but strongly recommend it to you, who have leisure, the next time you come to Rome, (and you will come, I dare say, so much the sooner) to take the benefit of his elegant and refined instructions. I am not, you see, in the number of those who envy others the happiness they cannot share themselves; on the contrary, it is a very sensible pleasure to me, when I find my friends in pos-

session of an enjoyment, from which I have the misfortune to be excluded. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO FABIUS JUSTUS.

IT is long since I received a letter from you. You will allege, perhaps, you have nothing to write; but let me have the satisfaction, at least, of seeing it under your hand, that you have nothing to write, or tell me, in the good old style, *If you are well, I am well.* I shall be contented even with that; as, indeed, that single circumstance from a friend includes every thing. You may possibly think I jest; but, believe me, I am perfectly in earnest. In short, all I desire is, to know how it is with you; for I can no longer remain in this ignorance without the utmost anxiety. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO CALESTRIUS TIRO.

I HAVE suffered a most sensible *loss;* if that word is sufficiently strong to express the misfortune which has deprived me of so excellent a man. Corellius Rufus is dead! and dead, too, by his own act! a circumstance of great aggravation to my affliction; as that sort of death which we cannot impute either to the course of nature, or the hand of Providence, is, of all others, the most to be lamented. It affords some consolation in the loss

of those friends whom disease snatches from us, that they fall by the general destiny of mankind; but those, who destroy themselves, leave us under the inconsolable reflection, that they had it in their power to have lived longer. 'Tis true, Corellius had many inducements to be fond of life; a blameless conscience, high reputation, and great dignity of character, together with all the tender endearments of a wife, a daughter, a grandson, and sisters; and amidst these considerable pledges of happiness, he had many and faithful friends. Still, it must be owned, he had the highest reason (which, to a wise man, will always have the force of the strongest obligation) to determine him in this resolution. He had long laboured under so tedious and painful a distemper, that even these blessings, great and valuable as they are, could not balance the evils he suffered. In his thirty-third year, (as I have frequently heard him say) he was seized with the gout in his feet. This distemper he received from his father; sin transmitted by inheritance. A life of abstinence and virtue had somewhat broken the force of this distemper while he had strength and youth to struggle with it; as a manly courage supported him under the increasing weight of it in his old age. I remember, in the reign of Domitian, to have made him a visit at his villa, near Rome, where I found him under the utmost tortures; for the gout was not only in his feet, but had spread itself over his whole body. As soon as I entered his chamber, his servants withdrew; for it was his

constant rule, never to suffer them to be present when any very intimate friend was with him: he even carried it so far as to dismiss his wife upon such occasions, though worthy of the highest confidence. Casting his eyes round the room, "Do "you know," says he, "why I endure life under "these cruel agonies? It is with the hope that I "may outlive, at least for one day, that villain.* "And Oh! ye gods, had you given me strength, "as you have given me resolution, I would infalli- "bly have that pleasure!" Heaven heard his prayer; and, having survived that tyrant, and lived to see liberty restored, he broke through those other great, but now less forcible attachments to the world, since he could leave it in possession of security and freedom. His malady increased; and, as it now grew too violent to admit of any relief from temperance, he resolutely determined to put an end to its uninterrupted attacks, by an effort of heroism. He had refused all sustenance during four days, when his wife Hispulla sent our common friend Geminius to me, with the melancholy news, that he was resolved to die; and that she and her daughter having in vain joined in their most tender persuasions to divert him from his purpose, the only hope they had now left was my endeavours to reconcile him to life. I ran to his house with the utmost precipitation. As I approached it, I met a second messenger from Hispulla, who informed me there was nothing to be hoped for, even from me, as he now seemed more inflexible than

* Domitian.

ever in his resolution. What confirmed their fears was an expression he made use of to his physician, who pressed him to take some nourishment. "'Tis resolved," he replied; an expression which, as it raised my admiration of his greatness of soul, so it does my grief, for the loss of him. I am every moment reflecting what a valuable friend, what an excellent man, I am deprived of. That he was arrived to his sixty-seventh year, which is an age even the strongest seldom exceed, I well know; that he is delivered from a life of continual pain; that he left his family and (what he loved even more) his country in a flourishing state: all this I know. Still I cannot forbear to lament him, as if he had been in the prime and vigour of his days; and I lament him (shall I own my weakness?) upon a private account. For I have lost, oh! my friend, I have lost the witness, the guide, and the governor of my life! And,—to confess to you as I did to Calvisius, in the first transport of my grief,—I sadly fear, now that I am no longer under his eye, I shall not keep so strict a guard over my conduct. Speak comfort to me, not that *he was old, he was infirm*: all this I know; but by supplying me with some reflections that are uncommon and resistless, that neither the commerce of the world, nor the precepts of the philosophers, can teach me. For all that I have heard, and all that I have read, occur to me of themselves; but all these are by far too weak to support me under so severe an affliction. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO SOCIUS SENECIO.

THIS year has proved extremely fertile in poetical productions: during the whole month of April, scarce a day has passed wherein we have not been entertained with the recital of some poem. It is a pleasure to me to find, notwithstanding there seems to be so little disposition in the public to attend assemblies of this kind, that a taste for polite literature still exists, and men of genius are not discouraged from producing their performances. It is visible, the greater part of the audience, which is collected upon these occasions, come with reluctance, loiter round the place of assembly, join in little parties of conversation, and are perpetually sending to inquire whether the author had made his entrance, whether he has read the preface, or whether he has almost finished the piece. Then, with an air of the greatest indifference, they just look in, and withdraw again; some by stealth, and others with less ceremony. It was not thus in the time of our ancestors. It is reported, that Claudius Cæsar, one day hearing a noise near his palace, inquired the occasion; and being informed that Nonianus was reciting a composition of his, went immediately to the place, and agreeably surprised the author with his presence. But now, were one to bespeak the company even of the most idle man living, and remind him of the appointment ever so

often, or ever so long beforehand; either he would avoid it under pretence of forgetfulness, or, if not, would look upon it as so much time lost; and for no other reason, perhaps, but because he had *not* lost it. So much the rather do *those* authors deserve our encouragement and applause, who have resolution to persevere in their studies, and exhibit their performances, notwithstanding this fastidiousness, or indifference of their audience. For my part, I scarce ever refuse to be present upon such occasions; though, to say truth, the authors have generally been my friends, as, indeed, there are few men of genius who are not. It is this has kept me in town longer than I intended. I am now, however, at liberty to return into the country, and compose something myself; but without any intention of reciting it, lest I should seem to have rather *lent* than given my attendance to those recitations of my friends; for in these, as in all other good offices, the obligation ceases the moment you seem to expect a return. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO JUNIUS MAURICUS.

YOU desire me to look out a proper husband for your niece: it is with justice you enjoin me that office. You were a witness to the esteem and affection I bore that great man, her father, and with what noble instructions he formed my youth, and taught me to deserve those praises he was pleased to bestow upon me. You could not give,

me, then, a more important, or more agreeable commission; nor could I be employed in an office of higher honour, than that of choosing a young man worthy of being father of the grandchildren of Rusticus Arulenus; a choice I should be long in determining, if I were not acquainted with Minutius Æmilianus, who seems formed for our purpose. He loves me with all that warmth of affection which is usual between young men of equal years, (as, indeed, I have the advance of him but by a very few) and reveres me, at the same time, with all the deference due to age; and, in a word, he is no less desirous to model himself by my instructions, than I was by those of yourself and your brother. He is a native of Brixia,* one of those provinces in Italy which still retain much of the frugal simplicity and purity of ancient manners. He is the son of Minutius Macrinus, whose humble desires were satisfied with standing at the head of the equestrian order:† for though he was nominated by Vespasian among those whom that prince dignified with the prætorian office, yet, with an inflexible greatness of mind, he resolutely preferred an elegant repose, to the ambitious, shall I call them, or honourable pursuits, in which we in public life are engaged? His grand-mother, on the mother's side, is Serrana Procula, of Padua: you are no stranger to the character of its citizens; yet Serrana is looked upon, even among these people of correct manners, as an exemplary in-

* A town in the territories of Venice, now called Brescia.

† See page 47, note.

stance of strict virtue. Acillius, his uncle, is a man of singular gravity, wisdom, and integrity. In short, you will find nothing throughout his family unworthy of yours. Minutius himself has great vivacity, as well as application, together with a most amiable and becoming modesty. He has already, with much credit, passed through the offices of quæstor, tribune, and prætor; so that you will be spared the trouble of soliciting for him those honourable employments. He has a genteel and florid countenance, with a certain noble mien that speaks the man of distinction: advantages, I think, by no means to be slighted, and which I consider as the proper tribute to virgin innocence. I am doubtful whether I should add, that his father is very rich. When I contemplate the character of those who require a husband of my choosing, I know it is unnecessary to mention wealth; but when I reflect upon the prevailing manners of the age, and even the laws of Rome, which rank a man according to his possessions, it certainly claims some regard; and, indeed, in establishments of this nature, where children and many other circumstances are to be duly weighed, it is an article that well deserves to be taken into the account. You will be inclined, perhaps, to suspect that affection has had too great a share in the character I have been drawing, and that I have heightened it beyond the truth: but I will stake all my credit, that you will find every circumstance far beyond what I have represented. I confess, indeed, I love Minutius (as he justly

deserves) with the warmth of a most ardent affection; but for that very reason I would not ascribe more to his merit than I know it will support. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO SEPTITIUS CLARUS.

HOW happened it, my friend, that you did not keep your engagement the other night to sup with me? But take notice, justice is to be had, and I expect you shall fully reimburse me the expense I was at to treat you; which, let me tell you, was no small sum. I had prepared, you must know, a lettuce a-piece, three snails,* two eggs, and a barley cake, with some sweet wine and snow:† the snow most certainly I shall charge

* The English reader may probably be surprised to find this article in Pliny's philosophical bill of fare; it will not be improper, therefore, to inform him, that a dish of snails was very common at a Roman table. The manner used to fatten them is related by some very grave authors of antiquity; and Pliny the elder mentions one Fulvius Hirpinus, who had studied that art with so much success, that the shells of some of his snails would contain about ten quarts. [H. N. i. 9. 56.] In some parts of Switzerland this food is still in high repute. See ADDISON's *Trav.* p. 364.

† The Romans used snow not only to cool their liquors, but their stomachs, after having inflamed themselves with high eating: *Nivem rodunt*, says Seneca, *solatium stomachi æstuantis.*—[*Ep.* 95.] This custom still prevails in Italy, especially at Naples, where (as Mr. Addison observes) they "drink very few liquors, not so much as water, that have not lain in *fresco*, and every body, from the highest to the lowest, makes use of it; insomuch, that a scarcity of snow would raise a mu-

to your account, as a rarity that will not keep. Besides all these curious dishes, there were olives of Andalusia, gourds, shalots, and a hundred other dainties equally sumptuous. You should likewise have been entertained either with an interlude, the rehearsal of a poem, or a piece of music, as you liked best; or (such was my liberality) with all three. But the luxurious delicacies* and Spanish dancers of a certain —— I know not how, were, it seems, more to your taste. However, I shall have my revenge of you, depend upon it;—in what manner, shall at present be a secret. In good truth it was not kind, thus to mortify your friend—I had almost said yourself?—and, upon second thoughts, I do say so: for how agreeably

tiny at Naples, as much as a dearth of corn or provisions in another country." *Trav.* 185.

* In the original, the dishes are specified, viz. oysters, the matrices of sows, with a certain sea shell-fish, prickly like a hedge-hog, called *Echinus*, all in the highest estimation among the Roman admirers of table luxury, as appears by numberless passages in the classic writers. Our own country had the honour to furnish them with oysters, which they fetched from Sandwich: Montanus, mentioned by Juvenal, was so well skilled in the science of good eating, that he could tell, by the first taste, whether they came from that coast:

> ——*Circæis nota forent, an*
> *Lucrinum ad Saxum*, Rupinove *edita fundo*
> *Ostrea, callebat primo deprendere morsu.*
>
> Sat. IV. 140.

> He, whether Circe's rock his oysters bore,
> Or Lucrine lake, or the *Ratupian* shore,
> Knew at first taste.——————
>
> Mr. Duke.

should we have spent the evening, in laughing, trifling, and literary amusements! You may sup, I confess, at many places more splendidly; but you can no where be treated with more unconstrained cheerfulness, simplicity, and freedom: only make the experiment; and if you do not ever afterwards prefer my table to any other, never favour me with your company again. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO ERUCIUS.

I CONCEIVED an affection for my friend Pompeius Saturninus, and admired his genius, even long before I knew the extensive variety of his talents: but he has now taken full and unreserved possession of my whole heart. I have heard him, in the unpremeditated as well as studied speech, plead with no less force and energy, than grace and eloquence. He abounds with just reflections; his periods are graceful and majestic; his words harmonious, and stamped with the mark of genuine antiquity. These united qualities infinitely delight you, not only when you are carried along, if I may so say, with the resistless flow of his charming and emphatical elocution, but also when considered distinctly and apart from that advantage. I am persuaded you will be of this opinion when you peruse his orations, and will not hesitate to place him in the same rank with the ancients, whom he so happily emulates. But you will view him with increased pleasure in the char-

acter of an historian, in which his style is both concise and clear, elegant and sublime; and the same strength of expression, though more compressed, runs through his historical harangues, which so eminently distinguishes and adorns his public orations. But these are not the whole of his excellencies; he has composed several poetical pieces in the manner of Calvus and Catullus. What strokes of wit, what sweetness of numbers, what pointed satire, and what touches of the tender passion appear in his verses! in the midst of which he sometimes designedly falls into an agreeable negligence in his metre, in the manner, too, of those admired poets. He read to me, the other day, some letters, which he assured me were written by his wife: I fancied I was perusing Plautus or Terence in prose. Whether they are that lady's, (as he positively affirms) or his own, which he absolutely denies, he deserves equal applause; either for writing so politely himself, or for having so highly improved and refined the genius of his wife, whom he married young and uninstructed. His works are ever in my hands; and I never sit down to compose any thing of my own, or to revise what I have already written, or am in a disposition to amuse myself, that I do not take up this agreeable author; and, as often as I do so, he is still new. Let me strongly recommend him to the same degree of intimacy with you; nor be it any objection to his works, that he is a contemporary author. Had he flourished in some former age, not only his publications, but pic-

tures and statues, representing his person, would have been passionately inquired after: shall we, then, from a sort of satiety, and merely because he is present among us, suffer his talents to languish and fade away, unhonoured and unadmired? It is surely a very perverse and envious disposition, to look with indifference upon a man worthy of the highest approbation, for no other reason, but because we have it in our power to see him, and to converse with him, and not only to give him our applause, but our friendship. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

TO CORNELIUS TITIANUS.

THE social virtues have not yet quite forsaken the world; and there are still those whose generous esteem extends even to departed merit. Titianus Capito has obtained the emperor's permission to erect a statue in the forum to the late L. Syllanus. It is a truly laudable and noble application of princely favour, to employ it to so worthy a purpose, and to exert one's interest for the glory of others. To preserve the memory of eminent characters, is, indeed, habitual to Capito: he has placed in his house (where he may safely take that liberty) the statues of the Bruti, the Cassii, and the Catos,* which he not only con-

* Suetonius informs us, that Caligula destroyed the statues of those illustrious persons, which Augustus had erected in the capitol; and published an edict, whereby he prohibited statues to be raised to any person in his life-time, unless by

templates with ardent veneration, but has also celebrated the respective lives of those great patriots in some excellent verses. One may be very sure a person possesses great virtue himself, who thus admires it in others. Capito has, by this act, secured to himself that immortality, which he has bestowed on Syllanus; for, he who erects a statue in the Roman forum to a worthy character, receives as much honour as he confers. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS.

YOUR letter informs me, that you are extremely alarmed by a dream; apprehending, that it forebodes some ill success to you in the cause you have undertaken to defend; and, therefore, desire that I would get it adjourned for a few days, or, at least, to the next. This is a favour, you are sensible, not very easily obtained, but I will use all my interest for that purpose;

—— For dreams descend from Jove.*—HOM.

In the mean while, it is very material for you to recollect, whether your dreams† generally

the emperor's express permission. It is probable, Pliny here alludes to a decree of this nature made by some succeeding emperor, perhaps Domitian, against publicly erecting statues to these glorious assertors of liberty.

* POPE, *Iliad* I. 63.

† Dreams were considered, from the earliest antiquity, as sacred admonitions and hints of futurity. Many of the heathen oracles were delivered in this manner; and, even among

represent things as they afterwards fall out, or quite the reverse. But if I may judge of yours by one that happened to myself, you have nothing to fear; for, it portends you will acquit yourself with great success. I had promised to be counsel for Julius Pastor; when I fancied in my sleep that my mother-in-law came to me, and, throwing herself at my feet, earnestly entreated me not to be concerned in the cause. I was at that time a very young man; the case was to be argued in the four centumviral courts; my adversaries were some of the most considerable men in Rome, and particular favourites of Cæsar; any of which circumstances were sufficient, after such an inauspicious dream, to have discouraged me. Notwithstanding this, I engaged in the cause, reflecting that,

the Jews, we find several intimations conveyed to their prophets in the same way. The Romans, in general, were great observers of dreams; and Augustus Cæsar is said to have escaped a very imminent danger at the battle of Philippi, by quitting his tent in compliance with a dream of Antonius, his physician. (*Val. Max.* L. I. C. 7.) This is mentioned to obviate any prejudice against Pliny, which may arise in the mind of a reader unacquainted with the prevailing sentiments of the ancients upon this point, who might otherwise be surprised to find our author talk seriously upon a subject of this nature. The truth is, as an eminent critic (*Dacier sur Hor.* L. II. Ep. 2.) has observed, with great good sense, there seems to be as much temerity in never giving credit to dreams, as there is superstition in always doing so. "It appears to me," says he, "that the true medium between these two extremes, is to treat them as we would a known liar; we are sure he most usually relates falsehoods; however, nothing hinders but he may sometimes speak truth."

Without a sign, his sword the brave man draws,
And asks no omen but his country's cause*—

for I looked upon the promise I had given to be as sacred to me as my country, or, if that were possible, more so. The event happened as I wished; and it was that very cause which first procured me the favourable attention of the public, and threw open to me the gates of Fame. Consider then, whether your dream, like that which I have related, may not pre-signify success. But, after all, perhaps you will think it more safe to pursue this cautious maxim: "never do a thing, concerning "the rectitude of which you are in doubt:" if so, write me word. In the interval, I will consider of some expedient, and endeavour that your cause shall be heard any day you like best. In this respect, you are in a better situation than I was: the court of the centumviri, where I was to plead, admits of no adjournment; whereas, in that where your cause is to be heard, though it is not easy to procure one, still, however, it is possible. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO ROMANUS FIRMUS.

AS you are my town's-man, my school-fellow, and the earliest companion of my youth; as there was the strictest friendship between my mother and uncle, and your father; (a happiness which I also enjoyed as far as the great inequality

* *Iliad XII.* 243. POPE.

of our ages would admit,) can I fail (thus biassed as I am by so many strong and weighty reasons,) to contribute all in my power to the advancement of your honours? The rank you bear in our province, as decurio, is a proof that you are possessed, at least, of an hundred thousand sesterces;* but that we may also have the satisfaction of seeing you a Roman† knight, I present to you three hundred thousand,‡ in order to make up the sum requisite to entitle you to that dignity. The long acquaintance we have had, leaves me no room to doubt you will ever be forgetful of this instance of my friendship. And I know your disposition much too well to think it necessary to advise you to enjoy this honour with the modesty that becomes a person who received it from me: for the advanced rank we possess by the good offices of a

* About 800l. of our money. The sesterce was a Roman silver coin, the value of which the most accurate antiquarians have settled at 1 penny, 3 farthings, and 3-4ths, making 1000 to be equal to 8l. 1s. 5d. half-penny; but, to avoid fractions in this place, and throughout all the following calculations, a thousand sesterces are considered as equivalent to only 8l. sterling.

† "The equestrian dignity, or that order of the Roman people which we commonly call *knights*, had nothing in it analogous to any order of modern knighthood, but depended entirely upon a valuation of their estates; and every citizen, whose entire fortunes amounted to 400,000 sesterces, that is, 3229l. of our money, was enrolled, of course, in the list of knights, who were considered as a middle order between the senators and common people, yet, without any other distinction than the privilege of wearing a gold ring, which was the peculiar badge of their order." *Life of Tully*, Vol. I. III. *in not.*

‡ About 2400l. sterling.

friend, is a kind of sacred trust, wherein we have *his* judgment, as well as our *own character*, to maintain, and therefore to be guarded with the greater caution.

LETTER XX.

TO CORNELIUS TACITUS.

I HAVE frequent debates with a learned and judicious person of my acquaintance, who admires nothing so much in the eloquence of the bar, as conciseness. I agree with him, where the cause will admit of this precision, it may be properly adopted; but insist, that to omit what is material to be mentioned, or only slightly to touch upon those points which should be strongly inculcated, and impressed on the minds of the audience, is, in effect, to desert the cause one has undertaken. In many cases, a copious manner of expression gives strength and weight to our ideas, which frequently make their effect upon the mind, as iron does upon solid bodies, rather by repeated strokes than a single blow. In answer to this, he usually has recourse to authorities, and produces Lysias amongst the Grecians, together with Cato and the two Gracchi, among our own countrymen, as instances in favour of the concise style. In return, I name Demosthenes, Æschines, Hyperides, and many others in opposition to Lysias; while I confront Cato and the Gracchi, as also Cæsar, Pollio, Cœlius, but above all, Cicero, whose longest oration is generally esteemed the best. It is

in good compositions, as in every thing else that is valuable; the more there is of them, the better. You may observe in statues, basso-relievos, pictures, and the bodies of men, and even in animals and trees, that nothing is more graceful than magnitude, if accompanied with proportion. The same holds true in pleading; and even in books, a large volume carries somewhat of beauty and authority in its very size. My antagonist, who is extremely dexterous at evading an argument, eludes all this, and much more, which I usually urge to the same purpose, by insisting that those very persons, upon whose works I found my opinion, made considerable additions to their orations when they published them. This I deny; and appeal to the harangues of numberless orators, particularly to those of Cicero, for Murena and Varenus, where he seems to have given us little more than the general charge. Whence it appears, that many things which he enlarged upon at the time he delivered those orations, were retrenched when he gave them to the public. The same excellent orator informs us, that, agreeably to the ancient custom, which allowed only of one counsel on a side, Cluentius had no other advocate than himself; and he tells us further, that he employed four whole days in defence of Cornelius; by which it plainly appears, that those orations which, when delivered at their full length, had necessarily taken up so much time at the bar, were greatly altered and abridged when he afterwards comprised them in a single volume, though, I must confess, indeed, a large one. But it is objected, there is a wide difference between good pleading

and just composition. This opinion, I acknowledge, has had some favourers, and it may be true; nevertheless, I am persuaded (though I may, perhaps, be mistaken) that, as it is possible a pleading may be well received by the audience, which has not merit enough to recommend it to the reader; so a good oration cannot be a bad pleading: for the oration on paper is, in truth, the original and model of the speech that was pronounced. It is for this reason we find, in many of the best orations extant, numberless expressions which have the air of unpremeditated discourse; and even in those which we are sure were never spoken; as, for instance, in the following passage from the oration against Verres.—"A certain mechanic—what's "his name? Oh, I'm obliged to you for helping "me to it: yes, I mean Polycletus." It cannot then be denied, that the nearer approach a speaker makes to the rules of just composition, the more perfect he will be in his art; always supposing, however, that he has the necessary indulgence in point of time; for, if he be limited in that article, no blame can justly be fixed upon the advocate, though much certainly upon the judge. The sense of the laws, I am sure, is on my side, which are by no means sparing of the orator's time: it is not brevity, but copiousness, a full representation of every material circumstance, which they recommend. And how is it possible for an advocate to acquit himself of that duty, unless in the most insignificant causes, if he affect to be concise? Let me add what experience, that unerring guide, has taught me: it has frequently been my province to

act both as an advocate and a judge; and I have often also attended as an assessor.* Upon those occasions, I have ever found the judgments of mankind are to be influenced by different modes of application, and that the slightest circumstances frequently produce the most important consequences. There is so vast a variety in the dispositions and understandings of men, that they seldom agree in their opinions concerning any one point in debate before them; or, if they do, it is generally from the movement of different passions. Besides, as every man naturally favours his own discoveries, when he hears an argument urged which had before occurred to himself, he will certainly embrace it as extremely convincing. The orator, therefore, should so adapt himself to his audience, as to throw out something which every one of them, in turn, may receive and approve as conformable to his own particular sentiments. I remember when Regulus and I were concerned together in a cause, he said to me, "You seem to think it necessary to "dwell upon every single circumstance: whereas I "always take aim at once at my adversary's throat, "and there I closely press him." ('Tis true, he tenaciously holds whatever part he has once fixed upon; but the misfortune is, he is extremely apt to mistake the right place.) I answered, it might possibly happen, that what he called the *throat*, was, in reality, some less vital part. As for myself, said I, who do not pretend to direct my aim

* The prætor was assisted by ten assessors, five of whom were senators, and the rest knights. With these he was obliged to consult before he pronounced sentence.

with so much certainty, I attack every part, and push at every opening; in short, to use a vulgar proverb, *I leave no stone unturned.* As in agriculture, it is not my vineyards, or my woods alone, but my fields also, that I cultivate; and (to pursue the allusion) as I do not content myself with sowing those fields with only one kind of grain, but employ several different sorts; so, in my pleadings at the bar, I scatter various arguments like so many kinds of seed, in order to reap from thence whatever may happen to succeed: for the disposition of your judges is as precarious, and as little to be ascertained, as that of soils and seasons. I remember the comic writer Eupolis mentions it in praise of that excellent orator Pericles, that

> On his lips Persuasion hung,
> And powerful Reason rul'd his tongue:
> Thus he alone could boast the art,
> To charm at once, and pierce the heart.

But could Pericles, without the richest variety of expression, and merely by force of the concise or the rapid style, or both together, (for they are extremely different) have thus *charmed* and *pierced* the heart? To delight and to persuade, requires time, and a great compass of language; and to leave a *sting* in the minds of his audience, is an effect not to be expected from an orator who slightly pushes, but from him, and him only, who thrusts home and deep. Another comic poet,* speaking of the same orator, says,

* Aristophanes.

His mighty words like Jove's own thunder roll;
Greece hears, and trembles to her inmost soul.

But it is not the close and the reserved; it is the copious, the majestic, and the sublime orator, who, with the lightning and thunder of his eloquence, hurries you impetuously along, and bears down all before him. There is a just mean, I own, in every thing; but he equally misseth the mark, who falls short of it, as he who goes beyond it; he who confines himself in too narrow a compass, as he who launches out with too great a latitude. Hence it is as common to hear our orators condemned for being too barren, as too luxuriant; for not reaching, as well as for overflowing the bounds of their subject. Both, no doubt, are equally distant from the proper medium; but with this difference, however, that in the one the fault arises from an abundance, in the other, from a deficiency; an error, which, if it be not a sign of a more correct, yet, it is certainly of a more fertile genius. When I say this, I would not be understood to approve that everlasting talker,* mentioned in Homer, but that other† described in the following lines:

Frequent and soft, as falls the winter snow,
Thus from his lips the copious periods flow.

Not but I extremely admire him, too,‡ of whom the poet says,

Few were his words, but wonderfully strong.

* Thersites, Iliad ii. v. 212.
† Ulysses, Iliad iii. v. 222. ‡ Menelaus, ibid.

Yet, if I were to choose, I should clearly give the preference to the style resembling *winter snow*, that is, to the full and diffusive; in short, to that pomp of eloquence which seems all heavenly and divine. But (it is replied) the harangue of a more moderate length is most generally admired. It is so, I confess:—but by whom? By the indolent only; and to fix the standard by the laziness and false delicacy of these, would surely be the highest absurdity.—Were you to consult persons of this cast, they would tell you, not only that it is best to say little, but that it is best to say nothing.

Thus, my friend, I have laid before you my sentiments upon this subject, and I shall readily abandon them, if not agreeable to yours. But, should you dissent from me, I beg you would communicate to me your reasons. For, though I ought to yield, in this case, to your more enlightened judgment, yet, in a point of such consequence, I had rather receive my conviction from argument, than authority. If you should be of my opinion in this matter, a line or two in return, intimating your concurrence, will be sufficient to confirm me in the justness of my sentiments: on the contrary, if you should think me mistaken, I beg you to give me your objections at large. Yet, has it not somewhat the air of bribery, to request only a short letter, if you agree with me; but enjoin you the trouble of a very long one, if you should be of a different opinion? Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO PATERNUS.

AS I rely very much upon the strength of your judgment, so I do upon the goodness of your eyes: not because I think your discernment very great, (for I would not make you vain,) but, because I think it as good as mine: which, it must be owned, is saying a great deal in its favour. Jesting apart, I like very well the appearance of the slaves which were purchased for me by your recommendation; all that I want farther, is to be satisfied of their behaviour: and, for this, I must depend upon their characters more than their countenances. Farewell.

LETTER XXII.

TO CATILIUS SEVERUS.

I AM, at present, (and have been a considerable time) detained in Rome, under the most alarming apprehensions. Titus Aristo, whom I esteem and love with singular regard, is fallen into a dangerous and obstinate illness, which deeply affects me. Virtue, knowledge, and good sense, shine out with so superior a lustre in this excellent man, that learning herself, and every valuable endowment, seems involved in the danger of his single person. How consummate is his knowledge, both in the political and civil laws of his country! How thoroughly conversant is he in every branch of

history and antiquity? In a word, there is no article of science, you would wish to be informed of, in which he is not skilled. As for my own part, whenever I would acquaint myself with any abstruse point of literature, I have recourse to him, as to one who supplies me with its most hidden treasures. What an engaging sincerity, what dignity in his conversation! How humble, yet how graceful his diffidence! Though he conceives, at once, every point in debate, yet he is as slow to decide, as he is quick to apprehend; calmly and deliberately weighing every opposite reason that is offered, and tracing it, with a most judicious penetration, from its source through all its remotest consequences. His diet is frugal, his dress plain; and whenever I enter his chamber, and view him reclined upon his couch, I consider the scene before me, as a true image of ancient simplicity, to which his illustrious mind reflects the noblest ornament. He places no part of his happiness in ostentation, but in the secret approbation of his conscience; seeking the reward of his virtue, not in the clamorous applauses of the world, but in the silent satisfaction which results from having acted well. In short, you will not easily find his equal, even among our philosophers by profession. He frequents not the places of public disputations,* nor idly amuses himself and others with vain and endless controversies. *His* exalted talents are employed to nobler purposes, and exerted in the scenes of civil and ac-

* The philosophers used to hold their disputations in the Gymnasia and Porticos, being places of the most public resort for walking, &c.

tive life. Many has he assisted with his interest, still more with his advice ! But though he dedicates his time to the affairs of the world, he regulates his conduct by the precepts of philosophy; and, in temperance, piety, justice, and fortitude, he has no superior. It is astonishing with what patience he supports his illness ; how he bears pain, endures thirst, and quietly submits to the pressure of those clothes which are laid upon him to promote perspiration in this raging fever. He lately called me, and a few more of his particular friends, to his bed-side, requesting us to ask his physicians what turn they apprehended his distemper would take; that, if they pronounced it incurable, he might voluntarily put an end to his life ; but if there were hopes of a recovery, how tedious and difficult soever it might prove, he would calmly wait the event ; for so much, he thought, was due to the tears and entreaties of his wife and daughter, and to the affectionate intercession of his friends, as not voluntarily to abandon our hopes, if they were not entirely desperate. A resolution this, in my estimation, truly heroical, and worthy of the highest applause. Instances are frequent in the world, of rushing into the arms of death without reflection, and by a sort of blind impulse ; but deliberately to weigh the reasons for life or death, and to be determined in our choice, as either side of the scale prevails, is the mark of no common greatness of mind.* We have had the satisfaction to re-

* The general lawfulness of self-murder, was a doctrine by no means universally received in the ancient pagan world ; many of the most considerable names, both Greek and Roman, having ex-

ceive the opinion of his physicians in his favour: may heaven give success to their art, and free me from this painful anxiety! If that should happily be the event, I shall immediately retire to my favourite Laurentinum, or, in other words, to my books and my studies. At present, so much of my time and thoughts are employed in attendance upon my friend, and in my apprehensions for his life, that I have neither leisure nor inclination for subjects of literature.

Thus have I informed you of my fears, my wishes, and my intentions. Communicate to me, in return, but in a gayer style, an account not only of what you are and have been doing, but even of your future designs. It will be a very sensible consolation to me in this distress of mind, to be assured that yours is easy. Farewell.

pressly declared against that practice. Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Tully, have condemned it: even Brutus himself, though he fell by his own hands, yet, in his cooler and philosophical hours, wrote a treatise,* wherein he highly condemned Cato, as being guilty of an act both of impiety and cowardice, in destroying himself. The judicious Virgil also adopts the same sentiments, and represents such unhappy persons as in a state of punishment:

Proxima deinde tenent mæsti loca, qui sibi letum
Insontes peperere manu, lucemque perosi
Projecere animas: Quam vellent æthere in alto,
Nunc et pauperiem et duros perferre labores!†

Then crowds succeed, who, prodigal of breath,
Themselves anticipate the doom of death;
Though free from guilt, they cast their lives away,
And sad and sullen hate the golden day.
Oh! with what joy the wretches now would bear
Pain, toil and woe, to breathe the vital air!

* Plut. in Brut. † Æn. vi. 434.

LETTER XXIII.

TO POMPEIUS FALCO.

YOU desire my opinion, whether you can with decency act as an advocate during your tribuneship?* But before I determine that question, I must know what are your sentiments of that office; whether you look upon it as a mere shadow of honour, and an empty title, or as a sacred and inviolable function, the exercise of which as no power can suspend, so neither ought the person himself who is invested with it? when I was myself in that post, (possibly I might be mistaken in supposing I was become of any importance, however, upon the supposition that I really was) I entirely quitted the bar. I thought it unbecoming a magistrate, who, upon all occasions, had a right of precedency, and in whose presence every person is obliged to rise, to be seen standing, while all about him were seated; that he, who has authority to impose silence on any man, should himself be directed when to cease speaking; that he, whom it is held impious to interrupt,† should be exposed to the scurrilous liberties of bar orators; which, to chastise, would be thought a sort of insolence of office, and yet it would be weakness to overlook. I considered, far-

* See Book 9. let. 13. note.

† As their characters were held sacred, it was esteemed the highest act of impiety to offer them any injury, or so much as to interrupt them when they were speaking.

ther, the great difficulty I should be under, if either my client or his adversary should happen to appeal to me as tribune, whether to interpose my authority, or, by a kind of resignation of my office, to act solely in my private capacity. For these reasons, I rather chose to officiate as the public magistrate, than the private advocate. But, with respect to you, (I repeat it again) the whole depends upon what your sentiments are of the office in question, and under what character you would choose to appear; remembering always, that a wise man will take upon himself such only as he is capable of sustaining with dignity.

LETTER XXIV.

TO BEBIUS.

MY friend and guest, Tranquillus, has an inclination to purchase a small farm, of which, as I am informed, an acquaintance of yours intends to dispose. I beg you would endeavour he may obtain it upon reasonable terms; which will add to his satisfaction in the purchase. A dear bargain is always disagreeable, particularly, as it is a reflection upon the buyer's judgment. There are several circumstances attending this little villa, which (supposing my friend has no objection to the price) are extremely suitable to his taste and desires: the convenient distance from Rome, the goodness of the roads, the smallness of the building, and the very few acres of land around it, which are just enough to amuse, but not to employ him. To a man of

the literary turn that Tranquillus is, it is sufficient if he have but a small spot to relieve the mind and divert the eye, where he may saunter round his grounds, traverse his single walk, grow familiar with his two or three vines, and count his little plantations. I mention these particulars, to let you see how much he will be obliged to me, as I shall be to you, if you can help him to this convenient little *box*, at a price which he shall have no occasion to repent. Farewell.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK SECOND.

LETTER I.

TO VOCONIUS ROMANUS.

ROME has not for many years beheld a more magnificent and solemn spectacle, than was lately exhibited in the public funeral of that great man, the illustrious and fortunate* Virginius Rufus. He lived thirty years in the full enjoyment of the highest reputation: and as he had the satisfaction to see his actions celebrated by poets, and recorded by historians, he seems even to have anticipated his fame with posterity. He was thrice raised to the dignity of consul; that he, who† refused to be the

* The ancients seem to have considered fortune as a mark of merit in the person who was thus distinguished. Cicero (to borrow the observation of the excellent Mr. Addison) recommended Pompey to the Romans for their general, upon three accounts, as he was a man of courage, of conduct, and of *good fortune*; and not only Sylla, the dictator, but several of the Roman emperors, as is still to be seen upon their medals, among other titles, gave themselves that of *felix*, or fortunate.

† At the time of the general defection from Nero, Virginius was at the head of a very powerful army in Germany, which had pressed him, and even attempted to force him, to accept the title

first of princes, might, at least, be the highest of subjects. As he escaped the resentment of those emperors to whom his virtues had given umbrage, and even rendered him odious, and ended his days when this best of princes, this friend of mankind,* was in quiet possession of the empire; it seems as if Providence had purposely preserved him to these times, that he might receive the honour of a public funeral. He calmly expired in the 84th year of his age, universally esteemed and revered; and had enjoyed an uninterrupted state of health during his whole life, excepting only a paralytic tremor in his hands, which, however, was attended with no pain. His last sickness, indeed, was severe and tedious;

of emperor. But he constantly refused it; adding, that he would not even suffer it to be given to any person but whom the senate should elect. With this army he marched against Vindex, who had put himself at the head of 100,000 Gauls, and having come up with him, gave him battle, in which Vindex was slain, and his forces entirely defeated. After this victory, when Nero's death was known in the army, the soldiers renewed their application to Virginius to accept the imperial dignity; and though one of the tribunes rushed into his tent, and threatened that he should either *receive the empire, or his sword through his body*, he resolutely persisted in his former sentiments. But as soon as the news of Nero's death was confirmed, and that the senate had declared for Galba, he prevailed with the army, though with much difficulty, to support that prince.—Plutarch, in Galb.

* The justness of this glorious title, *the friend of mankind*, which our author here gives to Nerva, is confirmed by the concurrent testimony of all the historians of these times. That excellent emperor's short reign seems, indeed, to have been one uninterrupted series of generous and benevolent actions; and he used to express the satisfaction he felt of being conscious that he had not committed a single act which could give just offence to any man. Dion, l. 68.

but even that circumstance contributed to render his character the more laudable. As he was preparing to return his public acknowledgments to the emperor, who had raised him to the consulship, a large volume which he accidentally received at that time, too weighty for a feeble old man, slipped out of his hands. In hastily endeavouring to recover it, the pavement being extremely slippery, he fell down and broke his thigh-bone ; which fracture, as it was unskilfully set at first, and having, besides, the infirmities of age to contend with, could never be brought to unite again. The funeral obsequies paid to the memory of this great man, have done honour to the emperor, to the present age, and even to eloquence herself. The consul Cornelius Tacitus pronounced his funeral oration : and thus the series of his felicities was completed by the public applause of a most eloquent orator. He died full of years and of glory, as illustrious by the honours he refused as by those he accepted. Still, however, he will be missed and lamented by the world, as the shining model of a better age ; especially by myself, who not only admired him as a patriot, but loved him as a friend. We were natives of the same province, and of neighbouring towns, and our estates also were contiguous. Besides these accidental connexions, he was likewise left guardian to me ; and indeed, he always treated me with the affection of a parent. Whenever I offered myself a candidate for any employment in the state, he constantly supported me with his interest ; and although he had long since renounced all offices of this nature, he would kindly give up the re-

pose of his retirement, and come in person to give me his suffrage. At the season of the year when it is customary for the priests to nominate such as they judge worthy to be received into their sacred office,* he constantly proposed me. Even in his last sickness I received a distinguishing mark of his affection: for, being apprehensive he might be appointed, by the senate, one of the five commissioners to reduce the public expences, he fixed upon me, young as I am, to carry his excuses, in preference to so many other friends of superior age and dignity; and, in a very obliging manner, assured me, that, had he a son of his own, he would, nevertheless, have employed me in that office. Have I not cause then to lament his death, as if it were immature, and thus pour out the fulness of my grief into the bosom of my friend? if, indeed, it be reasonable to grieve upon this occasion, or to esteem that event *death*, which, to *such* a man, is rather to be looked upon as the period of his mortality than the end of his life. He lives, my friend, and will continue to live for ever; and his fame will spread farther, and be more celebrated by mankind, now that he is removed from their sight.——I had many other things to write to you, but my mind is too full of the present subject to turn it to any other. Virginius is constantly in my thoughts: the vain but

* Namely, of augurs. "This college, as regulated by Sylla, consisted of fifteen, who were all persons of the first distinction in Rome: it was a priesthood for life, of a character indelible, which no crime or forfeiture could efface; it was necessary, that every candidate should be nominated to the people by two augurs, who gave a solemn testimony upon oath of his dignity and fitness for that office." Middleton's life of Cic. vi. 529.

lively impressions of him are continually before my eyes, and I am for ever fondly imagining that I hear him, converse with him, and embrace him. We have still, perhaps, some citizens amongst us who may rival him in virtue, and some may hereafter rise; but not one, I am persuaded, that will ever equal him in glory. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO PAULINUS.

I AM inclined to be angry with you: I am not quite sure I have reason, but angry however I am. Love, you know, is apt to be capricious, is frequently ungovernable, and ever jealous. The occasion of this my wrath is great, you must allow, were it just: yet taking it for granted that it is, I am vehemently angry at your long silence. Would you soften my resentment? Let your letters, for the future, be very frequent, and very long; I shall excuse you upon no other terms: and as absence from Rome, or engagement in business, is a plea I can by no means admit; so that of ill health may the gods avert! As for myself, I am enjoying, at my villa, the alternate pleasures of study and indolence; those happy privileges of uninterrupted leisure! Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO NEPOS.

WE had received very advantageous accounts of Isæus, before his arrival; but he is superior to all that was reported of him. He possesses the utmost facility and copiousness of expression, and his unpremeditated lectures have all the correctness and elegance of the most studied and elaborate composition. He delivers them in the Greek language, or rather the genuine Attic. His exordiums are polite, easy, and harmonious; and, when the subject requires, solemn and majestic. He gives his audience liberty to call for any question they please, and sometimes even to name what side of it he shall take; when immediately he rises up in all the graceful attitude of an orator, and enters at once into the discussion with surprising fluency. His reflections are solid, and clothed in the choicest expressions, which present themselves to him without the least hesitation. The ease and strength of his most unprepared discourses plainly discover that he has been very conversant in the best authors, and much accustomed to compose himself. He opens the topic with great propriety; his style is clear, his reasoning strong, his inferences just, and his figures are both graceful and sublime. In a word, he at once instructs, entertains, and affects you; and he possesses each of those powers in so eminent a degree, that you are at a loss to determine in which he most excels. His arguments

are formed with all the strength and closeness of the strictest logic; a point not very easy to attain even in studied compositions. His memory is so extraordinary, that he will repeat what he has before delivered extempore, without losing a single word. This wonderful faculty he has acquired by great application and practice; for his whole time is so devoted to subjects of this nature, that he thinks and talks of nothing else. Though he is above sixty-three years of age, he still chooses to continue in this profession; than which, it must be owned, none abounds with men of more merit, simplicity, and integrity. We who are conversant in the real contentions of the bar, unavoidably contract a certain petulance, how contrary soever to our natural tempers; but the business of the schools, as it turns merely upon fictitious causes, affords an employment, not only unapt to excite the angry passions, but particularly agreeable to those who are advanced in years, especially as nothing can be more desirable at that period of life, than to enjoy those rational satisfactions which were the most pleasing occupations of our youth. I look, therefore, upon Isæus, not only as the most eloquent, but the most happy of men; as I shall esteem you the most insensible, if you should appear to slight his acquaintance. Let me prevail with you then to come to Rome, if not upon my account, or any other cause, at least, for the pleasure of hearing this extraordinary person. Do you remember to have read of a certain inhabitant of the city of Cadiz, who was so struck with the illustrious character of Livy, that he travelled to Rome on purpose to see that great

genius ; and, as soon as he had satisfied his curiosity, returned home ? A man must have a very illiberal, and incurious (I had almost said a very insensible) cast of mind, not to think whatever relates to a science, so entertaining, so noble, and so elegant, worthy of his attention. You will tell me, perhaps, you have authors, in your own study, equally eloquent. I allow it ; and those authors you may peruse at any time, but you cannot always have an opportunity of being an auditor of Isæus. Besides, we are infinitely more affected with what we hear, than what we read. There is something in the voice, the countenance, the habit,* and the gesture of the speaker, that concur in fixing an impression upon the mind, and give this method of instruction greatly the advantage of any thing one can receive from books. This, at least, was the opinion of Æschines, who, having read to the Rhodians a speech of Demosthenes, which they loudly applauded ; "but how," said he, "would you have been

* The ancients thought every thing that concerned an orator, worthy of their attention, even to his very *dress*. Ovid mentions the *habit*, as well as the air and mien of Germanicus, as expressive of his eloquence :

Dum—silens adstat, status est vultusque diserti,
Spemque decens doctæ vocis amictus habet. De Pont. l. 2. 5.

Ere yet he speaks, the orator is seen
In all the eloquence of *garb* and mien.

And the author of the dialogue *de Orat.* 39. goes so far as to assign the use of a certain confined garment then in vogue, among the reasons which gave a check to the ancient spirit of eloquence ; as the judicious Quintilian thought it deserving his pains, to lay down very precise rules upon the article of his orator's garments. Vid. Inst. Orat. l. 11. 3.

affected, had you heard the orator himself thundering out this sublime harangue?" Æschines, if we may believe Demosthenes, had great force and dignity of utterance; yet, you see, he could not but confess it would have been a considerable advantage to the oration, if it had been pronounced by the author himself, in all the strength and energy of his powerful elocution. What I aim at by this, is, to persuade you to hear Isæus; if for no other reason, at least, that you may have it to say you once heard him. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO CALVINA.

IF your father had left several creditors; or, indeed, a single one except myself; you might justly, perhaps, scruple* to enter upon his estate, which, with such encumbrances, might prove a burthen too heavy even for one of our sex to undertake. But since, out of regard to the affinity that subsisted between us, I was contented to remain the only person unsatisfied, who had any demand upon the estate, while other creditors, I will not say more importunate, but certainly more cautious, were paid off; and as I contributed 100,000 sesterces† towards your marriage portion, over and above the sum your father charged upon this estate for your

* By the ancient Roman law, the heir, if he entered upon the estate, was liable to the debts of the testator or ancestor, even though the estate were not sufficient to pay them.

† About 800l. of our money.

fortune, which may be esteemed my gift too, as it was to be paid out of a fund before appropriated to me. When you consider these instances of my friendship, you can want no stronger pledge that you will find me an easy creditor. In this confidence, you should not scruple to enter upon your inheritance; and, by that means, protect the memory of your father from the reproach dying insolvent. But that I may give you a more substantial encouragement than mere words, I entirely acquit you of the debt he owed me. Do not hesitate to receive this present at my hands, upon the supposition that I can ill spare so large a sum. It is true, my revenue is but moderate; the expences which the dignity of my station requires, are considerable; while the yearly income of my estate, from the nature and circumstance of it, is as uncertain as it is small: yet, what I want in wealth, I make up by œconomy, the surest source that supplies my bounty. I must be cautious, no doubt, not to exhaust it by too much profusion; but it is a caution which I shall observe towards others: with respect to yourself, reason will justify my liberality, though it should overflow its proper bounds. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO LUPERCUS.

I SEND you, at last, the piece you have so often desired, and which I have as frequently promised, but it is a part only; the remainder I am still polishing. In the mean while, I thought there would

be no impropriety in laying before you such portions as were most correct. I beg you to read it with the same attention that I wrote it; for I never was engaged in any work that required so much. In my former speeches, diligence and integrity only were required; in the present, I had to manifest my patriotism. But, while I dwelt with pleasure upon the honour of my native country, and endeavoured not only to support its rights, but heighten its glory; my oration swelled insensibly. However, I request you to abridge even those favourite topics, wherever you find it necessary; for, when I consider the fastidious delicacy of my readers, I am sensible the surest recommendation I can have to their favour, is by the shortness of the trouble I give them. But at the same time that I abandon my performance to your utmost severity in this instance, I must ask quarter for it in several others. Some consideration ought to be had to the taste of young people, especially where the subject admits of it. In view to this, I have given myself a latitude in describing those places which are frequently mentioned in this performance; and have ventured to treat them not only historically, but poetically. If any austere critic should take offence at this liberty, and think it too florid for the gravity of this sort of composition; the other parts of the oration will, I trust, satisfy his severity, and obtain indulgence for these its gayer colourings. I have, indeed, endeavoured to gain my several readers by adapting my style to their different turns. And though I am afraid there are some passages that will displease particular persons, as not falling

in with their peculiar taste; yet, upon the whole, its variety, I trust, will recommend it in general: as at an elegant entertainment, though we do not, perhaps, taste of every dish, yet we may admire the general disposition of the whole; and if we happen to meet with some part of the fare which is not to our palate, we are not the less pleased, however, with what is. I am not so vain as to pretend I have actually furnished out such collation; I would be only understood to mean that I have made the attempt: And, perhaps, not altogether without success, if you will exercise your skill upon what I now and shall hereafter send. You will tell me, I know, that you can form no certain judgment till you see the whole. There is some truth in this, I confess! Nevertheless, for the present, you may acquaint yourself with this detached part, wherein you will find some things, perhaps, that will bear a separate examination. If you were to be shewn the head, or any other part of a statue, though you could not determine what proportion it bore to the entire figure, yet, you would be able to judge of the elegancy of that particular member. From what other principle is it, that specimens of books are handed about, but that it is supposed the beauties of particular portions may be discerned, without viewing their relation to the whole?—The pleasure I receive in conversing with you has carried me a greater length than I intended. But I stop here; for it is not reasonable that I, who am for setting bounds even to a speech, should set none to a letter.—Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO AVITUS.

IT would be a long story, and of no great importance, to tell you by what accident I supped lately with a person, with whom I am by no means intimate, and who, in his own opinion, treated us with much splendid frugality; but, according to mine, in a sordid, yet expensive manner. Some very elegant dishes were served up to himself, and a few more of us; while those which were placed before the rest of the company, were extremely cheap and mean. There were, in small bottles, three different sorts of wine; not that the guests might take their choice, but that they might not have an option in their power. The best was for himself and his friends of the first rank; the next for those of a lower order, (for, you must know, he measures out his friendship according to the degrees of quality,) and the third for his own and his guests' freedmen. One who sat near me took notice of this circumstance, and asked me how I approved of it? Not at all, I replied. Pray then, said he, what is your method on such occasions? Mine, I returned, is to give all my visitors an equal reception: for when I make an invitation, it is to entertain, not to *distinguish*, my company; I set every man upon a level with myself whom I admit to my table, not excepting even my freedmen, whom I look upon, at those times, to be my guests, as much as any of the rest. At this he expressed some surprise, and

asked if I did not find it a very expensive method? I assured him, not at all; and that the whole secret lay, in being contented to drink no better wine myself than I gave to others. And, certainly, if a man is wise enough to moderate his own luxury, he will not find it so very chargeable a thing to entertain all his visitors in general, as he does himself. Restrain the delicacy of your own palate within proper bounds, if you would be an œconomist in good earnest: you will find temperance a much better mode of saving expences, than such reproachful distinctions. It were pity a young man of your excellent disposition should be imposed upon by the immoderate luxury which prevails at some tables, under the false notion of frugality; whenever any folly of this nature falls within my observation, I shall, in consequence of that affection I bear you, point it out to you, as an example which you ought to shun. Remember, therefore, nothing is more to be avoided than this modern alliance of luxury with sordidness; qualities extremely odious, when existing in distinct characters, but much more when they meet in the same person.—Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO MACRINUS.

THE senate decreed yesterday, at the recommendation of the emperor, a triumphal statue to Vestricius Spurinna; not as to many others, who never saw a field of battle, or heard the sound of a trumpet, unless at a show; but, as to one, who,

by his martial virtues, has justly merited that honour. Spurinna, by the power of his arms, restored the king of the Bructeri* to his throne: and this, by a victory, of all others the most noble; for he struck such a terror into that warlike people, that they submitted at the very first view of his troops. But, at the same time that the senate rewarded him as a hero, they considered him as a father; and, to console him for the loss of his son Cottius, who died during his absence upon that expedition, they voted, likewise, a statue to that excellent youth; a very unusual honour for a person of his early years; but the services of the father well deserved, that the pain of so severe a wound should be soothed by no common balm. Indeed Cottius himself gave so remarkable a specimen of the noblest qualities, that it is but reasonable his life, which had so short a period, should be extended, as it were, by this kind of immortality. The purity of his manners, and the dignity of his behaviour, created him such general respect, that he has a just claim to equal those venerable persons in honour, whom he rivalled in virtue; an honour, if I mistake not, conferred not only to perpetuate the memory of the deceased youth, and in consolation to the surviving father, but for the sake of public example. The young men of this age will be hence encouraged to cultivate every worthy principle, when they see such distinguishing rewards bestowed upon one of their own years; at the same time, that men of quality will rejoice in having a numerous issue, while they may expect

* A people of Germany, supposed to have inhabited the country about Rees and Emerick, in the duchy of Cleves.

the satisfaction of leaving a worthy race, if their children should survive them; or so glorious a consolation, if they should survive their children. For the sake of the public, therefore, I am glad that a statue is decreed to Cottius; and so, indeed, I am for my own; for I loved this accomplished youth as ardently, as I now tenderly regret him. It will be a great satisfaction to me to see this figure as I may occasionally pass by, and to stop sometimes to contemplate it. If there is a pleasure in looking upon the pictures of departed friends in our own house, how much more upon those public representations of them, which are not only memorials of their air and countenance, but of their glory and honour. Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO CANINIUS.

HOW is my friend employed? Is it in the pleasures of study, or in those of the field? Or does he unite* both, as he well may, on the banks of our favourite Larius?† The fish, in that noble lake, will supply you with sport of that kind; as the surrounding woods will afford you game; while the solemnity of that sequestered scene will, at the same time, dispose your mind to contemplation.

* B. 1. Let. 6. in not.

† Now called Lago di Como, in the Milanese. Comum, the place where Pliny was born, and near to which Caninius had a country house, was situated upon the border of this lake.

Whether you are engaged with some only, or with each of these agreeable amusements, far be it that I should say I envy you; but I must confess, I greatly regret that I also cannot partake of them; a happiness I long for, as earnestly as a man in a fever for drink to allay his thirst, or for baths and fountains to assuage his heat. But if it be not given me to see a conclusion of these unpleasant occupations, shall I never, at least, break loose from them? Never, indeed, I much fear; for new affairs are daily rising, while the former still remain unfinished: such an endless train of business is continually pressing upon me, and riveting my chains still faster! Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO APOLLINARIS.

I AM extremely anxious for the success of the petition, which Euritius has presented to the senate; and I feel for my friend, what I never felt for myself. My credit and character are, indeed, in some measure, at stake. I obtained for him, of Cæsar, the honour of wearing the *laticlave*,* and also the office of quæstor; as it is by my interest too that he is indulged with the privilege of peti-

* The laticlave was some honourable distinction, peculiar, in the times of the republic, to the senators; but whether a particular sort of garment, or only an ornament upon it, the critics are not agreed. Though the more general opinion is, that it was a broad stripe of purple, sewed upon the fore part of their tunic, and ran round the middle of the breast.

tioning for the tribunate; which, if the senate should refuse him, I am afraid it will be thought I imposed upon the emperor. I must, therefore, in support of my own character, endeavour, that the judgment of the public may confirm the opinion which Cæsar has conceived of him, by my representation. But if I were not, for these reasons, obliged to interest myself in the success of Euritius, yet his probity, good sense, and learning, would incline me to assist him with my utmost power; as, indeed, he and his whole family are deserving of the highest commendation. His father, Euritius Clarus, is a man of strict honour and ancient simplicity of manners; and not only an able, eloquent, and experienced advocate, but defends every cause he undertakes with a courage and integrity, no less to his honour than his singular modesty. Septitius, his uncle, is one of the most plain, open, sincere, and candid men I ever knew. There is a friendly contention amongst them, who shall shew me most affection; which I am persuaded they all equally feel for me. I have now an opportunity of obliging the whole family, in the single person of Euritius: accordingly, I solicit all my friends with the utmost earnestness, apply to them at their own houses, and every place of public resort; in a word, exert my whole power and credit to serve him. I must beg of you, likewise, to take some share of this trouble with me: I will return you the same good office whenever you shall require it, and even without your request. As you have many friends, admirers, and dependents, it

is but shewing yourself a well-wisher to Euritius in this affair, and numbers will be ready to second your inclinations. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO OCTAVIUS.

YOU are certainly a most obstinate, I had almost said a most cruel man, thus to withhold from the world such excellent compositions! How long do you intend to deny your friends the pleasure, and yourself the glory, of your poetical performances? Suffer them, I entreat you, to come abroad, and to be admired; as admired they undoubtedly will be wherever the Roman language is understood. The public has for some time earnestly expected them; and you ought not to disappoint or mortify its impatience any longer. Some few poems of yours have already, contrary to your inclinations indeed, broke their prison, and escaped to light: These, if you do not collect together, some person or other will claim the agreeable wanderers as their own. Remember, my friend, the mortality of human nature, and that there is nothing so likely to preserve your name as a monument of this kind; all others are as frail and perishable as the men whose memory they pretend to perpetuate. You will say, I suppose, as usual, *Let my friends see to that.* May you find many whose care, fidelity, and erudition, render them able and willing to undertake so considerable a charge! but surely it is not altogether prudent

in any man to expect from others, what he will not do for himself. However, as to the publication, I will press you no farther; be that when you shall think proper. But let me, at least, prevail with you to recite them, that you may be the more disposed to send them abroad, from the very flattering reception which I may venture to assure you they will receive from the assembly. I please myself with imagining the crowd, the admiration, the applause, and even the silence that will attend your recital; for the silence of an audience, when it proceeds from an earnest desire of hearing, is as agreeable to me as the loudest approbation. Do not then, by this unreasonable delicacy, deny yourself any longer the very desirable and certain fruit of your studies: if you should, the world, I fear, will be apt to charge you with idleness and indolence, or, perhaps, with timidity. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO ARRIANUS.

YOU take pleasure, I know, in a relation of any thing that is transacted in the senate, worthy of that august assembly: for, though love of ease has led you into retirement, your heart still retains its zeal for the majesty of the commonwealth. Accept then the following account of what lately passed in that venerable body: A transaction for ever memorable by its importance, and not only remarkable by the quality of the person concerned, but useful by the severity of the example.

Marius Priscus, formerly proconsul of Africa, being impeached by that province, instead of entering upon his defence, petitioned that a commission of select judges might be appointed for his trial. Cornelius Tacitus and myself being assigned by the senate counsel for that province, thought it our duty to inform the house, that the crimes alledged against Priscus were of too atrocious a nature to fall within the cognizance of an inferior court: for he was charged with venality in the administration of justice, and even of taking money to pass sentence of death upon persons perfectly innocent. Fronto Catius rose in his behalf, and moved, that the whole enquiry might be confined to the single article of bribery; displaying, upon this occasion, all the force of that pathetic eloquence he is master of, in order to raise the compassion of the senate. The debates grew warm, and the members were much divided in their sentiments. Some were of opinion, that it was a matter which did not legally come under the discussion of the senate; others, that the house was at liberty to proceed upon it, or not, as it should see proper; and that none of his different crimes ought to escape the hand of justice. At last Julius Ferox, the consul elect, a man of great worth and integrity, proposed, that judges should be granted him provisionally, and, in the mean while, that those persons should be proceeded against, to whom it was alledged he had sold innocent blood. Not only the majority of the senate gave into this opinion; but, after all the contention that had been raised, it was generally adopted. I could not but observe,

upon this occasion, that sentiments of compassion, though they at first operate with great force, give way at last to the cool dictates of reason and reflection; and that numbers will support an opinion, by joining in the general voice, which they would never singly and deliberately defend. The fact is, there is no discerning the right side of a question amidst the confused clamours of a crowd; one must consider it apart, if one would view it in its true light. Vitellius Honoratus, and Flavius Martianus, the persons who were ordered to be summoned, were brought before the house. Honoratus was charged with having given three hundred thousand sesterces* to procure a sentence of banishment against a Roman knight, as also the capital conviction of seven of his friends. Against Martianus it was alledged, that he gave seven hundred thousand,† in order to procure another person to be condemned to suffer various tortures; which were accordingly inflicted, and the unhappy man was first whipped, afterwards sent to work in the mines, and at last strangled in prison. But the death of Honoratus prevented the justice of the senate upon him. Martianus, however, appeared, but without Priscus. Tullius Cerealis, therefore, who had been formerly consul, thought proper to move, agreeably to his privilege as a senator, that Priscus might have notice of the business then before the house; whether it was because he thought his being present would raise more compassion, or

* About L.2400 of our money.

† About L. 5600 of our money.

more resentment towards him; or because, as I am inclined to believe, he thought it most equitable, that, as the charge was against them both, so they should both join in the defence, and be acquitted or condemned together. The affair was adjourned to the next meeting of the senate, which proved the most august and solemn I was ever present at. The emperor himself (for he was consul) presided. It happened likewise to be the month of January ;* a season remarkable upon many accounts, and particularly for the great number of senators it always brings together. Not only the importance of the cause, the noise it had made in the world, the expectation that had been raised by the several adjournments, but that innate curiosity in mankind to acquaint themselves with every thing remarkable and uncommon, drew the people from all parts. Figure to yourself the concern and anxiety which we, who were to speak before such an awful assembly, and in the presence of the prince, must have felt! I have often pleaded in the senate; and, indeed, there is no place where I am more favourably heard; yet, as if the scene had been entirely new to me, I found myself under an unusual distress upon this occasion. Besides, there was something in the circumstances of the person accused, which added considerably to the difficulties I laboured under: a man, once of consular dignity, and a member of the sacred college, now stood before me, stripped of all his honours. It

* In this month the several magistrates entered upon their respective offices.

was a painful office, I thought, to accuse one who appeared already condemned; and for whom, therefore, though his crimes were enormous, compassion took its turn, and seemed to plead in his behalf. However, I collected myself enough to begin my speech; and the applause I received was equal to the fears I had suffered. I spoke almost five hours successively, (for they indulged me above an hour beyond the time at first allotted to me,) and what, at my first setting out, had most contributed to raise my apprehensions, proved, in the event, greatly to my advantage. The goodness, the care (I dare not say the solicitude) of the emperor, were so great towards me, that he frequently spoke to one of my attendants, who stood behind me, to desire me to spare myself; imagining I should exert my strength beyond what the weakness of my constitution would admit. Claudinus Marcellius replied in behalf o Martianus; after which, the assembly broke up till the next day; for the evening* coming on, there was not time to proceed farther. The next day, Salvius Liberalis, a very clear, acute, and spirited orator, spoke in defence of Priscus; and he exerted all his talents upon this occasion. C. Tacitus replied to him in a strain of the most powerful eloquence, and with a certain dignity which distin-

* It was not lawful, says one of the commentators, for the senate to assemble before sun-rise, or to continue after sun-set, and quotes Gellius in support of this opinion. But either this custom was not received in Pliny's time, or Gellius must be understood to mean what Mr. Kennet expressly says, that no decree of the senate could pass after sun-set. For that the house actually sat after that time, appears from B. 4. Let. 9. *Dixit in noctem, atque etiam nocte, illatis lucernis.*

guishes all his speeches. Fronto Catius rose a second time in favour of Priscus, and, in a very impressive speech, endeavoured, as indeed the case required, rather to soften the judges, than defend his client. The evening coming on, the senate proceeded no farther that day, but met the next, and entered upon the proofs. It was much to the honour of the senate, and worthy of ancient Rome, thus to be adjourned only by the night, and then re-assemble for three days successively. The excellent Cornutus Tertullus, consul elect, ever firm in the cause of truth, moved, that Marius should pay into the treasury the 700,000 sesterces* he had received, and be banished Italy. Tertullus was for extending the sentence still farther with respect to Martianus, and proposed that he should be banished even from Africa. He concluded, with adding, that Tacitus and I having faithfully and diligently discharged the parts assigned to us, the senate should declare we had executed our trust to their satisfaction. The consuls elect, and those who had already enjoyed that office, agreed with Tertullus, except Pompeius: he moved, that Priscus should pay the seven hundred thousand sesterces into the treasury, but suffer no other punishment than what had been already inflicted upon him for extortion:† as for Martianus, he was for having him banished during five years only. There was a large party for both opin-

* Honoratus being dead, that part of the charge against Marius, which related to his taking three hundred thousand sesterces of him, could not, it seems, be proved.

† A forfeiture of four times the sum received.

ions, and perhaps the majority secretly inclined to the milder sentence; for many of those who appeared at first to agree with Tertullus, seemed afterwards inclined to join with Pompeius; but, upon a division of the house, all those who stood near the consuls, went over to the side of Tertullus. This being observed by the party of Pompeius, they also deserted him in the same manner; so that he was extremely exasperated against those who had urged him to this vote, particularly against Regulus, whom he upbraided for abandoning him in a step which he himself had advised. There is, indeed, such an inconsistency in the general character of Regulus, that he is at once both bold and timorous. Thus ended this important trial; but there remains a considerable part of the business still behind. It is concerning Hostillius Firminus, lieutenant to Marius Priscus, who is strongly charged with being an accomplice; as it appears by the account-books of Martianus, and by a speech which he made in an assembly of the people at Leptis,* that he had exacted fifty thousand denarii† of Martianus; that he was also accessary to the wicked administration of Priscus; and that he received ten thousand sesterces‡ un-

* In Africa.

† About L. 1458 of our money. The Denarius was the chief silver coin among the Romans. Mr. Greaves (who, as Dr. Arbuthnot observes, may be justly reckoned a classical author upon this subject) has valued it at seven-pence three farthings, [Tab. Coins, 1.;] but, to avoid fractions, it is here considered as only equivalent to seven-pence English.

‡ About L. 80 of our money.

der the title of his perfumer; an office perfectly well adapted to this effeminate fop, who is all over essence and perfume. It was agreed, on the motion of Tertullus, to proceed against him the next meeting of the senate; for, either by accident or design, he was at this time absent.

Thus have I given you an account of what is doing in town. Let me know, in return, the news of the country: how your shrubs and your vineyards, your corn and your delicate flocks of sheep, flourish? In a word, if you should not send me a long letter, you must expect, for the future, to be punished in your own way, and to receive none but short ones from me. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

THE remaining part of the enquiry which I mentioned to you in my former letter, concerning the affair of Priscus, is at last, I will not say terminated as it ought; however, it is finished. Firminus being brought before the senate, made such a sort of defence as a man generally does who is conscious of detected guilt. The consuls elect were much divided what sentence to pass: Cornutus Tertullus moved he should be expelled the senate; but Nerva, with more artifice, proposed, that he should be only declared for ever incapable of holding the office of proconsul; and this, as it had the appearance of a milder sentence, prevailed; though, in truth, it is of all others the most severe. For

can any situation be more wretched, than to be obliged to undergo the fatigue of a member of the senate, at the same time that one is cut off from all hopes of enjoying those honours to which a senator is entitled? And, after having received such an ignominy, were it not better to be for ever buried in retirement, than to be marked out by so conspicuous a station to the view and scorn of the world? Besides, to consider this with respect to the public, what can be more unbecoming the dignity of the senate, than to suffer a person to retain his seat in the house, after having been publicly censured by that august assembly? What can be more indecent than for the criminal to be ranked with his judges? For a man, excluded the proconsulship, because he behaved infamously as a lieutenant,* to sit in judgment upon proconsuls? For one proved guilty of extortion, to condemn or acquit others of similar crimes? Yet these reflections, it seems, made no impression upon the majority. Votes go by number, not weight; nor can it be otherwise in assemblies of this kind, where nothing is more unequal than that equality which prevails in them: for, though every member has the same right of suffrage, every member has not the same strength of judgment to direct it.

I have thus discharged the promise I gave you in my last letter, which, by this time, I imagine (unless any accident should have befallen the mes-

* The lieutenant accompanied the proconsul or governor, for the judging of inferior causes, and the management of all smaller concerns; every thing of moment being referred to the immediate care of the governor.

senger) has reached your hands; for I trusted the conveyance to one, of whose diligence and fidelity I am well assured. I hope you will now, on your part, make me as full a return for this and my former, as the scene you are in will afford. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO PRISCUS.

AS I know you gladly embrace every opportunity of obliging me, so there is no man to whom I had rather be obliged. I apply to you, therefore, preferably to any other person, for a favour which I am extremely desirous of obtaining. You, who are commander in chief of a very considerable army, have many opportunities of exercising your generosity; and the length of time you have enjoyed that post, must have enabled you to provide for all your own friends. I hope you will now turn your eyes upon some of mine: they are but a few, indeed, for whom I shall solicit you; though your generous disposition, I know, would be better pleased if the number were greater. But it would ill become me to trouble you with recommending more than one or two: at present, I will only mention Voconius Romanus. His father was of great distinction among the Roman knights; and his father-in-law, or, as I might more properly call him, his second father (for his affectionate treatment of Voconius entitles him to that appellation), was still more conspicuous. His mother was one of the most considerable ladies of Upper Spain; you

know what character the people of that province bear, and how remarkable they are for the strictness of their manners. As for himself, he has been lately admitted into the sacred order of priesthood. Our friendship began with our studies, and we were early united in the closest intimacy. We lived together under the same roof, both in town and country; and he was a party in my most serious and my gayest hours; where, indeed, could I have found a more faithful friend, or more agreeable companion? In his conversation, and even in his very voice and countenance, there is the most amiable sweetness; as at the bar he discovers an elevated genius, an easy and harmonious elocution, a clear and penetrating apprehension. He has so happy a turn for epistolary writing,* that were you

* It appears from this, and some other passages in these letters, that the art of epistolary writing was esteemed by the Romans in the number of liberal and polite accomplishments; and we find Cicero mentioning, with great pleasure, in some of his letters to Atticus, the elegant specimen he had received from his son, of his genius in this way. [Ad Att. l. xv. 16, 17.] It seems, indeed, to have formed part of their education; as, in the opinion of Mr. Locke, it well deserves to have a share in ours. "The writing of letters (as that judicious author observes) enters so much into all the occasions of life, that no gentleman can avoid shewing himself in compositions of this kind. Occurrences will daily force him to make this use of his pen, which lays open his breeding, his sense, and his abilities, to a severer examination than any oral discourse." [Treat. on Educ. 86.] Pliny was of the same opinion; for, in a subsequent letter [B. vii. Let. 9.] wherein he lays down a method of study to one who desired his sentiments upon that head, he particularly recommends to him performances of this kind. It is to be wondered we have so few writers in our own language, who deserve to be pointed out as models upon such an occasion. After having named sir William Temple, it would be difficult, perhaps, to add a second. The elegant writer of Mr. Cowley's Life men-

to read his letters, you would imagine they had been dictated by the Muses themselves. I love him with a more than common affection; and I know he returns it with equal ardour. Even in the earlier part of our lives, I warmly embraced every opportunity of doing him all the good offices which then lay in my power; as I have lately obtained for him of the emperor* the privilege† granted to those who have three children: a privilege

tions him as excelling in this uncommon talent; but as that author declares himself of opinion, "that letters which pass between familiar friends, if they are written as they should be, can scarce ever be fit to see the light," the world is unluckily deprived of what, no doubt, would have been well worth its inspection. A late distinguished genius treats the very attempt as ridiculous, "and professes himself a mortal enemy to what they call a fine letter." His aversion, however, was not so strong, but he knew how to conquer it when he thought proper; and the letter which closes his correspondence with Bishop Atterbury, is, perhaps, the most genteel and manly address that ever was penned to a friend in disgrace. The truth is, a fine letter does not consist in saying fine things, but expressing ordinary ones in an uncommon manner. It is the *proprie communia dicere*, the art of giving grace and elegance to familiar occurrences, that constitutes the merit of this kind of writing. Mr. Gay's letter concerning the two lovers, who were struck dead with the same flash of lightning, is a master-piece of the sort; and the specimen he has there given of his talents for this species of composition, makes it much to be regretted we have not more from the same hand: we might then have equalled, if not excelled, our neighbours, the French, in this, as we have in every other branch of polite literature, and have found a name among our own countrymen to mention with the easy Voiture.

* Trajan.

† By a law passed A. U. 762, it was enacted, that every citizen of Rome, who had three children, should be excused from all troublesome offices where he lived. This privilege the emperors sometimes extended to those who were not legally entitled to it. See Book vii. Let. 16. in not.; and Book 10. Let. 95. in not.

which, though Cæsar very rarely bestows, and always with great caution, yet he conferred, at my request, in such a manner, as to give it the air and grace of being his own choice. The best way of shewing that I think he deserves the obligations he has already received from me, is, by increasing them, especially as he always accepts my services with so much gratitude as to merit farther.

Thus I have given you a faithful account of Romanus, and informed you how thoroughly I have experienced his worth, and how much I love him. Let me entreat you to honour him with your patronage in a way suitable to the generosity of your heart, and the eminence of your station. But, above all, admit him into a share of your affection; for, though you were to confer upon him the utmost you have in your power to bestow, you can give him nothing so valuable as your friendship; and that you may be assured he is worthy of it, even to the highest degree of intimacy, I send you this short sketch of his character. I should continue my intercessions in his behalf, but that I am persuaded you do not require to be importuned, and I have already repeated them in every line of this letter; for, to shew a just reason for what one asks, is to intercede in the strongest manner. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO MAXIMUS.

YOU guessed right: I am much engaged in pleading before the centumviri; but the business

there has more of fatigue than pleasure. The causes are generally of small moment; and it is very seldom that any thing considerable, either from the importance of the question, or the rank of the persons concerned, comes before them. There is another disagreeable circumstance attending it; there are very few lawyers who frequent this court, with whom I can take any sort of satisfaction in being joined. The greater part is composed of a parcel of impudent, obscure young men, who come hither from declaiming in the schools; and behave with so much irreverence and impropriety, that my friend Attilius well observed, "Our youth set out at the bar with centumviral causes, as they do at the academies with Homer;" intimating, that, in both places, they begin where they should end. But, in *former* times, (to use an old man's phrase) it was not customary for the youth, even of the best families, to appear in this court, unless introduced by some person of consular dignity: such was the respect which our ancestors entertained for this noble profession! but now, since every fence of modesty and decorum is broken down, and all distinctions levelled and confounded, the youth of our days are so far from waiting to be introduced, that they rudely rush in uninvited. The audience that follow them are fit attendants upon such orators; a low rout of hired mercenaries, assembling themselves in the middle of the court, where the dole is dealt round to them as openly as if they were in a private dining-room; and at this noble price they run from court to court! The Greeks have a name in their language for this sort of people, importing,

that they are applauders by profession; and we stigmatise them with the opprobrious title of table-flatterers; yet the meanness alluded to, in both languages, increases every day. It was but yesterday, two of my domestic officers,* mere striplings, were hired for this goodly purpose at the price of three denarii †: such is the easy purchase of eloquence! Upon these honourable terms we fill our benches, and gather a circle; and thus it is those vociferous shouts are raised, when a man, who stands in the middle of the ring, gives the word. For you must know, these honest fellows, who understand nothing of what is said, or, if they did, could not hear it, would be at a loss, without a signal, how to time their applause: for those, that do not hear a syllable, are as clamorous in their praises as any of the rest. If, at any time, you should happen to pass by while the court is sitting, and would know the merit of any of our advocates, you have no occasion to give yourself the trouble of listening to them: take it for a rule, he, that has the loudest commendations, deserves them the least. Largius Licinius was the first who gave rise to this custom; but then he went no farther than to solicit an audience. I remember to have heard my tutor, Quinctilian, say, that Domitius Afer, as he was pleading before the centumviri, in his usual grave and solemn manner, heard, on a

* In the original it is *nomenclatores*, a kind of master of the ceremonies, whose business it was to announce the names of the clients and dependents, as he severally introduced them to the patron.

† About one shilling and eleven-pence farthing of our money.

sudden, a most immoderate and unusual noise; being a good deal surprised, he left off: the clamour ceased, and he began again: he was interrupted a second time, and a third. At last, he enquired who it was that was speaking? He was told, Licinius.—"*Alas!*" said he, "*Eloquence in "this court is no more!*" The truth is, it then only began to decline, when, in Afer's opinion, it no longer existed; whereas now it is almost extinct. I am ashamed to say with what an unmanly tone the orators deliver themselves, and with what a squeaking applause they are received; nothing seems wanting to complete this sing-song oratory, but the claps, or rather the music of the stage. The applause of the audience is expressed by a kind of howling, (for I can call it by no other term) which would be indecent even in the theatre. Hitherto, the interest of my friends, and the consideration of my early time of life, have retained me in this court; as it would be thought, I fear, rather to proceed from indolence, than a just indignation at these indecencies, were I yet to leave it: however, I go there less frequently than usual, and am thus making a gradual retreat. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO VALERIANUS.

HOW goes on your old estate at Marsi?† and how do you approve of your new purchase?

† One of the ancient divisions of Italy, comprehending part of what is now called the farther Abruzzo.

Has it as many beauties in your eye now, as before you bought it? *That* would be extraordinary, indeed! for an object in possession seldom appears with the same charms it had in pursuit. As for myself, the estate left me by mother uses me but ill; however, I value it for her sake, and am, besides, grown callous by long suffering.—Frequent occasions of complaint render one ashamed of complaining any more.

LETTER XVI.

TO ANNIANUS.

YOU act agreeably to your usual concern for my interest, when you advise me to consider the codicil* of Acillanus (who has appointed me one of his co-heirs) as void, because it is not confirmed by his will. That the law in this case deems it invalid, I well know; and it is a point of jurisprudence to which even those who are ignorant of every other are usually no strangers. But I have a law of my own, which I shall always religiously observe; and that is, punctually to perform the will of the dead, though it may want the essential forms. This codicil, beyond all manner of doubt, is of Acilianus's own hand-writing; therefore,

* A codicil, by the ancient civil law, was a less solemn kind of will; wherein it was not necessary to observe so strictly the ceremonies prescribed by the law for a will. But no legacy given by a codicil was valid, unless confirmed by the will, which was esteemed its basis. This, however, by later emperors, was altered. Vid. Just. Inst. T. 25. l. 2.

though it is not confirmed by his will, I shall be guided by it as strictly as if it were; especially, as there is no danger that any villanous informer can take advantage of this mistake. If, indeed, there were any hazard, that what I give to the legatees in the codicil, would be seized as forfeited to the use of the public, I should, perhaps, act with more deliberation: but as the forfeiture in this case is merely for the benefit of the heir, and he may dispose of what accrues to him as such, in the manner he thinks proper; nothing hinders, since the law does not, my observing that rule which I have laid down to myself. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

TO GALLUS.

YOU are surprised, it seems, that I am so fond of my Laurentinum,* or (if you like the appel-

* Pliny had no estate round this seat, his whole possessions here being included (as he informs us in B. 4. Let. 6.) in this house and gardens. It was merely a winter villa, in which he used to spend some of the cold months, whenever his business admitted of his absence from Rome; and, for this reason it is, that we find warmth is so much considered in the disposition of the several apartments, &c. And, indeed, he seems to have a principal view to its advantages as a winter house throughout the whole description of it. See Castel's Villas of the Ancients.

Scamozzi, in his *Architect. Univers. l.* 3. 12. has given a plan and elevation of this villa. Mons. Felibien has also annexed a plan to his translation of this letter; as our own countryman, the ingenious Mr. Castel, has done in his *Villas of the Ancients illustrated.* But they differ extremely among themselves as to the disposition of the several parts of this building, and, perhaps, have rather pursued the idea of modern architecture, than that

lation better) my Laurens: but you will cease to wonder, when I acquaint you with the beauty of the villa, the advantages of its situation, and the extensive prospect of the sea-coast. It is but seventeen miles distant from Rome; so that, having finished my affairs in town, I can pass my evenings here, without breaking in upon the business of the day. There are two different roads to it; if you go by that of Laurentum, you must turn off at the fourteenth mile-stone; if by Ostia, at the 11th. Both of them are, in some parts, sandy, which makes it somewhat heavy and tedious, if you travel in a carriage, but easy and pleasant to those who ride on horseback. The landscape, on all sides, is extremely diversified; the prospect, in some places, being confined by woods, in others, extending over large and beautiful meadows, where numberless flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, which the severity of the winter has driven from the mountains, fatten in the vernal warmth of this rich pasturage. My villa is large enough to afford all desirable accommodations, without being extensive. The porch before it is plain, but not mean, through which you enter into a portico in the form of the letter D, which includes a small but agreeable area. This affords a

which is traced out in their original; at least, if the supposition advanced by one of the commentators upon this epistle be true; who contends, that the villas of the ancients were not one uniform pile of building contained under the same roof, but that each apartment formed a distinct and separate member from the rest. The ruins of this villa are said to have been discovered some time about the year 1714, but whether any plan was ever taken of so valuable a remain of antiquity, or the reality of ascertained, the translator has not been able to learn.

very commodious retreat in bad weather, not only as it is inclosed with windows, but particularly as it is sheltered by an extraordinary projection of the roof. From the middle of this portico you pass into an inward court, extremely pleasant, and from thence into a handsome hall, which runs out towards the sea; so that when there is a south-west wind, it is gently washed with the waves, which spend themselves at the foot of it. On every side of this hall, there are either folding-doors, or windows equally large, by which means you have a view from the front and the two sides, as it were, of three different seas; from the back part, you see the middle court, the portico, and the area; and, by another view, you look through the portico into the porch, from whence the prospect is terminated by the woods and mountains which are seen at a distance. On the left hand of this hall, somewhat farther from the sea, lies a large drawing-room, and beyond that, a second of a smaller size, which has one window to the rising and another to the setting sun: this has, likewise, a prospect of the sea, but being at a greater distance, is less incommoded by it. The angle which the projection of the hall forms with this drawing-room, retains and increases the warmth of the sun; and hither my family retreat in winter to perform their exercises: it is sheltered from all winds, except those which are generally attended with clouds, so that nothing can render this place useless, but what, at the same time, destroys the fair weather. Contiguous to this, is a room forming the segment of a circle, the windows of which

are so placed, as to receive the sun the whole day: in the walls are contrived a sort of cases, which contain a collection of such authors whose works can never be read too often. From hence you pass into a bed-chamber through a passage, which being boarded and suspended, as it were, over a stove which runs underneath, tempers the heat which it receives and conveys to all parts of this room. The remainder of this side of the house is appropriated to the use of my slaves and freedmen; but most of the apartments, however, are neat enough to receive any of my friends. In the opposite wing is a room ornamented in a very elegant taste; next to which lies another room, which, though large for a parlour, makes but a moderate dining-room; it is exceedingly warmed and enlightened, not only by the direct rays of the sun, but by their reflection from the sea. Beyond, is a bed-chamber, together with its ante-chamber, the height of which renders it cool in summer; as its being sheltered on all sides from the winds, makes it warm in winter. To this apartment another of the same sort is joined by one common wall. From thence you enter into the grand and spacious *cooling-room*,* belonging to the bath,† from the opposite walls of

* "The principal use of this room seems to have been designed to prepare the bodies of those that had been in the former room, for their going into the warmer air. *Castel's Villas*, p. 33.

† "The custom of bathing in hot water, was become so habitual to the Romans, in Pliny's time, that they every day practised it before they lay down to eat; for which reason, in the city, the public baths were extremely numerous; in which Vi-

which, two round basons project, sufficiently large to swim in. Contiguous to this is the perfuming-room, then the sweating-room, and next to that, the furnace which conveys the heat to the baths: adjoining, are two other little bathing-rooms, fitted up in an elegant rather than costly manner: annexed to this, is a warm bath of extraordinary workmanship, wherein one may swim, and have a prospect, at the same time, of the sea. Not far from hence, stands the tennis-court, which lies

truvius gives us to understand, there were, for each sex, three rooms for bathing, one of cold water, one of warm, and one still warmer; and there were cells of three degrees of heat for sweating: to the forementioned members, were added others for anointing and bodily exercises. The last thing they did before they entered into the dining-room was to bathe; what preceded their washing was their exercise in the spheristerium, prior to which it was their custom to anoint themselves. As for their sweating-rooms, though they were, doubtless, in all their baths, we do not find them to have been used but upon particular occasions."—*Castel's Villas of the Ancients*, p. 31.

The Roman magnificence seems to have particularly displayed itself in the article of their baths. Seneca, dating one of his epistles from a villa which once belonged to Scipio Africanus, takes occasion, from thence, to draw a parallel between the simplicity of the earlier ages, and the luxury of his own times in that instance. By the idea he gives of the latter, they were works of the highest splendour and expence. The walls were composed of Alexandrine marble, the veins whereof were so artfully managed, as to have the appearance of a regular picture: the edges of the basons were set round with a most valuable kind of stone, found in Thasius, one of the Greek islands, variegated with veins of different colours, interspersed with streaks of gold; the water was conveyed through silver pipes, and fell, by several descents, in beautiful cascades. The floors were inlaid with precious gems, and an intermixture of statues and colonades contributed to throw an air of elegance and grandeur upon the whole. Vide *Sen. Ep.* 86.

open to the warmth of the afternoon sun. From thence you ascend a sort of turret, containing two entire apartments below; as there are the same number above, besides a dining-room which commands a very extensive prospect of the sea, together with the beautiful villas that stand interspersed upon the coast. At the other end, is a second turret, in which is a room that receives the rising and setting sun. Behind this is a large repository, near to which is a gallery of curiosities, and underneath, a spacious dining-room, where the roaring of the sea, even in a storm, is heard but faintly: it looks upon the garden, and the *gestatio** which surrounds the garden. The *gestatio* is encompassed with a box-tree hedge, and where that is decayed, with rosemary: for the box, in those parts which are sheltered by the buildings, preserves its verdure perfectly well; but where, by an open situation, it lies exposed to the spray of the sea, though at a great distance, it entirely withers. Between the garden and this *gestatio* runs a shady plantation of vines, the alley of which is so soft, that you may walk bare-foot upon it without any injury. The garden is chiefly planted with fig and mulberry trees, to which this soil is as favourable, as it is averse from all others. In this place is a banqueting-room, which, though it stands remote from the sea, enjoys a prospect nothing inferior to that view: two apartments run round the back part of it, the windows whereof look upon the entrance of the villa, and into a very pleasant kitchen

* See p. 9. note.

garden. From hence an enclosed portico* extends, which, by its great length, you might suppose erected for the use of the public. It has a range of windows on each side, but on that which looks towards the sea, they are double the number of those next the garden. When the weather is fair and serene, these are all thrown open; but if it blows, those on the side the wind sets are shut, while the others remain unclosed without any inconvenience. Before this portico lies a terrace, perfumed with violets, and warmed by the reflection of the sun from the portico, which, as it retains the rays, so it keeps off the north-east wind; and it is as warm on this side as it is cool on the opposite: in the same manner it proves a defence against the south-west; and thus, in short, by means of its several sides, breaks the force of the winds from what point soever they blow. These are some of its winter advantages: they are still more considerable in summer; for at that season it throws a shade upon the terrace during all the forenoon, as it defends the *gestatio*, and that part of the garden which lies contiguous to it, from the afternoon sun, and casts a greater or less shade, as the day either increases or decreases; but the portico itself is then coolest, when the sun is most scorching, that is, when its rays fall directly upon the roof. To these its benefits I must not forget to add, that, by setting open the windows, the wes-

* "These enclosed porticoes differed no otherwise from our present galleries, than that they had pillars in them: the use of this room was for walking."—*Castel's Villas*, p. 44.

tern breezes have a free draught, and by that means the enclosed air is prevented from stagnating. On the upper end of the terrace and portico stands a detached building in the garden, which I call my *favourite ;* and indeed it is particularly so, having erected it myself. It contains a very warm winter-room, one side of which looks upon the terrace, the other has a view of the sea, and both lie exposed to the sun. Through the folding doors you see the opposite chamber, and from the window is a prospect of the enclosed portico. On that side next the sea, and opposite to the middle wall, stands a little elegant recess, which, by means of glass doors and a curtain, is either laid into the adjoining room, or separated from it. It contains a couch and two chairs. As you lie upon this couch, from the feet you have a prospect of the sea ; if you look behind, you see the neighbouring villas ; and from the head you have a view of the woods : these three views may be seen either distinctly* from so many different windows in the room, or blended together in one confused prospect. Adjoining to this is a bed-chamber, which neither the voice of the servants, the murmuring of the sea, nor even the roaring of a tempest, can reach ; not lightning, nor the day itself, can penetrate it, unless you open the windows. This profound tranquillity is occasioned by a passage, which separates the wall of this chamber from that of the garden ; and thus,

* "It must have been from the middle of the room that he could see all these prospects separate and distinct, which, upon a "nearer approach to any particular window, must have appeared intermingled."—*Castel's Villas*, p. 38.

by means of that intervening space, every noise is precluded. Annexed to this is a small stove-room, which, by opening a little window, warms the bed-chamber to the degree of heat required. Beyond this lies a chamber and ante-chamber, which enjoys the sun, though obliquely indeed, from the time it rises till the afternoon. When I retire to this garden-apartment, I fancy myself a hundred miles from my own house, and take particular pleasure in it at the feast of the Saturnalia,* when, by the licence of that season of festivity, every other part of my villa resounds with the mirth of my domestics: thus I neither interrupt their diversions, nor they my studies. Among the pleasures and conveniences of this situation, there is one disadvantage, and that is, the want of a running stream; but this defect is, in a great measure, supplied by wells, or rather I should call them fountains, for they rise very near the surface. And indeed the quality of this coast is remarkable; for in what part soever you dig, you meet, upon the first turning up of the ground, with a spring of pure water, not in the least salt, though so near the sea. The neighbouring forests afford an abundant supply of fuel; as every other accommodation of life may be had from Ostia: to a moderate man, indeed, even the next village (between which and my house there is only one villa) would furnish all

* A feast held in honour of the god Saturn, which began on the 19th of December, and continued, as some say, for seven days. It was a time of general rejoicing, particularly among the slaves, who had at this season the privilege of taking great liberties with their masters.

common necessaries. In that little place there are no less than three public baths; which is a great conveniency, if it happen that my friends come in unexpectedly, or make too short a stay to allow time for preparing my own. The whole coast is beautifully diversified by the contiguous or detached villas that are spread upon it, which, whether you view them from the sea or the shore, have the appearance of so many different cities. The strand is sometimes, after a long calm, perfectly smooth, though, in general, by the storms driving the waves upon it, it is rough and uneven. I cannot boast that our sea produces any very extraordinary fish; however, it supplies us with exceeding fine soals and prawns; but as to provisions of other kinds, my villa pretends to excel even inland countries, particularly in milk; for hither the cattle come from the meadows in great numbers, in pursuit of shade and water.

Tell me now, have I not just cause to bestow my time and my affection upon this delightful retreat? Surely you are too fondly attached to the pleasures of the town, if you do not feel an inclination to take a view of this my favourite villa.†

† Mr. Castel observes, "that though Pliny here calls his house *Villula*, it appears that, after having described but part of it, yet, if every Diœta, or entire apartment, may be supposed to contain three rooms, he has taken notice of no less than forty-six; besides all which, there remains near half the house undescribed, which was," as he says, "allotted to the use of the servants; and it is very probable this part was made uniform with that he has already described."—But it must be remembered, that diminutives in Latin do not always imply smallness of size, but are frequently used as words of endearment and approbation; and in this sense it seems most probable that Pliny here uses the word *Villula*.

I much wish, at least, you were so disposed, that, to the many charms with which it abounds, it might have the very considerable addition of your company to recommend it. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO MAURICUS.

WHAT can be more agreeable to me than the office you have enjoined me, of choosing a proper tutor for your nephews? It gives me an opportunity of revisiting the scene of my education, and of turning back again to the most pleasing part of my life. I resume my seat, as formerly, among the young scholars; and have the pleasure to observe the respect they pay me from the reputation I have acquired by the same studies. Accordingly, when I lately came in upon them, while they were warmly declaiming before a very full audience of the same rank with myself, the moment I appeared they were silent. I mention this for their honour rather than my own; and to let you see the just hopes you may conceive of placing your nephews to their advantage in this seminary. I purpose to hear all the several professors; and then to write you such an account of them as will enable you (as far as a letter can) to judge of their respective abilities. The faithful execution of this important commission, is what I owe to the friendship that subsists between us, and to the memory of your brother. Nothing, certainly, is more your concern, than that *his* children (I would have said *yours*, but that I

know you now look upon them even with more tenderness than your own) may be found worthy of such a father, and such an uncle; and I should have claimed a part in that care, though you had not required it of me. I am sensible, in thus selecting a preceptor, I shall draw upon me the displeasure of all the rest of that profession: but when the interest of these youths is concerned, I esteem it my duty to hazard the displeasure, or even enmity, of any man, with as much unconcern as a parent would for his own children. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO CEREALIS.

YOU advise me to read my late speech before an assembly of my friends. I will, since it is agreeable to your opinion; though I have many scruples. Compositions of this kind lose, I well know, all their fire and force, and almost even their very name, by a mere recital. It is the solemnity of the tribunal, the concourse of one's friends, the suspense of the event, the emulation between the several orators concerned, the zeal of the different parties formed amongst the audience; in a word, it is the air, the action,* the attitude of the speaker,

* Some of the Roman orators were as much too vehement in their action, as those of our country are too calm and spiritless. In the violence of their elocution, they not only used all the warmth of gesture, but actually walked backwards and forwards. Tully and Quinctilian have laid down rules how far, and in what instance, this liberty was allowable, and both agree it ought to be used with great caution and judgment. The latter of those ex-

together with all the corresponding gestures of his body, that conspire to give a spirit and grace to what he delivers. Hence those who sit when they plead, though they have most of the other advantages I just now mentioned, yet, from that single circumstance, weaken the whole force of their eloquence. The eyes and hands of a reader, those important instruments of graceful elocution, being engaged, it is no wonder the attention of the hearer grows languid, while he has none of those awakening and alluring circumstances to excite it. To these general considerations, I must add this particular disadvantage, which attends the speech in question, that it is chiefly of the argumentative kind; and it is natural for an author to suspect that what he wrote with labour will not be read with pleasure. For who is there so unprejudiced, as not to prefer the flowing and florid to the close and unornamented style? It is very unreasonable there should be any distinction; however, it is certain, the judges generally expect one manner of pleading, and the audience another; whereas, an auditor ought to be affected only with those articles which would strike him, were he in the place of the judge. Nevertheless, it is possible, the objections which lie against this piece may be surmounted, in consideration of the novelty it has to recommend it: the novelty I mean with respect to us; for the Greek orators have a method of reasoning, though upon a different occasion, not altogeth-

cellent critics mentions, upon this occasion, a witticism of Flavius Virginius, who asked one of these walking orators, *Quot millia passuum declamasset?* "How many *miles* he had declaimed?" Quinct. Inst. ed. Oxon. p. 587.

er unlike that which I employed. They, when they would throw out a law, as contrary to some former one unrepealed, argue by comparing those laws together; so I, on the contrary, endeavour to prove, that the crime,* which I was insisting upon as falling within the intent and meaning of the law relating to public extortions, was agreeable, not only to that law, but likewise to other laws of the same nature. Those, who are ignorant of the jurisprudence of their country, can have no taste for reasonings of this kind; but those who are not, ought to be so much the more favourable in the judgment they pass upon them. I shall endeavour, therefore, if you persist in my reciting it, to collect a learned audience. But before you determine this point, I entreat you thoroughly to weigh the difficulties I have laid before you, and then decide as reason shall direct: for it is reason that must justify you; obedience to your commands will be a sufficient apology for me. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO CALVISIUS.

"GIVE me a penny, and I will tell you a story worth gold;"† or rather, you shall hear two or

* Some of the commentators are of opinion, (and it is not improbable,) that the speech, mentioned in this letter, is the same which Pliny delivered in the senate against M. Priscus. See Letter xi. of this Book.

† Alluding to the phrase of certain *Charlatans*, who gained their livelihood by gathering a circle round them in the public places of Rome, and amusing the gaping multitude by popular traditionary tales, or wonderful stories of their own invention.

three; for one brings to my mind another. It is no matter which I begin with, so take them as follows:—Verania, the widow of Piso, who was adopted by Galba, lay extremely ill: upon this occasion, Regulus made her a visit. By the way, mark the assurance of the man, to visit a lady to whom he was so extremely odious, and to whose husband he was a declared enemy! Even barely to enter her house, would have been impudent enough; but he had the confidence to go much farther, and very familiarly placed himself by her bed-side. He began very gravely with enquiring, what day and hour she was born? Being informed of these important particulars, he composes his countenance, fixes his eyes, mutters something to himself, counts his fingers, and all this merely to keep the poor sick lady in suspense. When he had finished this ridiculous mummery, "You are," says he, "in one of your climacterics; however, you will get over it. But, for your greater satisfaction, I will consult a certain diviner, whose skill I have frequently experienced." Accordingly, away he goes, performs a sacrifice, and returns with the strongest assurances, that the omens confirmed what he had promised on the part of the stars. Upon this, the credulous good woman calls for her will, and gives Regulus a handsome legacy. Some time afterwards her distemper increased; and, in her last moments, she exclaimed against this infamous wretch, who had thus basely deceived her, though he wished every curse might befal his son,*

* It was customary among the ancients to swear by what they

if what he promised her were not true. But such sort of imprecations are as common with Regulus as they are impious; and he continually devotes that unhappy youth to the curses of those gods, whose vengeance his own frauds every day provoke.

Velleius Blæsus, a person of consular dignity, and remarkable for his immense wealth, had an inclination, in his last sickness, to make some alterations in his will. Regulus, who had lately endeavoured to insinuate himself into his friendship, hoped to receive some advantage by the intended change; and accordingly applied himself to the patient's physicians, and conjured them to exert all their skill to prolong the poor man's life. But the moment the will was signed, his style was changed: "How long," says he to these very physicians, "do you design to keep this man in misery? Since you cannot preserve his life, why will you prolong his death?" Blæsus is since dead; and, as if he had overheard every word that Regulus had said, he has not left him one farthing.—And now have you had enough? or, like a truant school-boy, are you for listening still to another tale? If so, Regulus will supply you. You must know then, that Aurelia, a lady of distinguished accomplish-

held most dear. To this custom (as a late critic justly observes) Martial alludes:

Ecce negas jurasque mihi per templa tonantis;
Non credo: jura, verpe, per Anchialum.

Swear, though thou dost by Jove, thou wilt deceive;
Swear by Anchialus; I'll then believe.

That is, swear by your pathic, your boy Anchialus.

ments, designing to execute her will,* had dressed herself, for that purpose, in a most splendid manner. Regulus, who was present as a witness, turned to the lady, and, "Pray," says he, "leave me these fine clothes." Aurelia, at first, thought him in jest: but he insisted upon it very seriously, and compelled her to open her will, and insert this legacy; and though he saw her write it, yet he would not be satisfied till he read the clause himself. However, Aurelia is still alive; though Regulus, no doubt, when he solicited this bequest, expected soon to enjoy it. Thus are legacies and estates conferred upon this abandoned man, as if he really deserved them! But why should I wonder at this in a city where impudence and iniquity receive the

* This was an act of great ceremony; and if Aurelia's habit was of the kind which some of the Roman ladies used, the legacy must have been considerable which Regulus had the impudence to ask. "The *vestes Byssinæ* (as the ingenious Dr. Arburthnot observes,) which we are told some of the ladies wore, must have been of such an extravagant price, that there is no stuff in our age comes up to it. The very materials of which would be worth 491. 12s. the pound, avoirdupois weight; and consequently a garment weighing 20 pounds would cost 9921. exclusive of the manufacture." *Arb. of ancient Coins*, &c. p. 146. Now I am upon this head, I cannot forbear mentioning the prodigious extravagance of these ladies in the article of jewels. Pliny the elder says, (Lib. 9. 35.) he saw Lollia Paulina with an equipage of this kind, amounting (according to the above-cited author's calculation) to 322,9161. 13s. 4d. of our money. In one instance of expence, however, the modern ladies seem to exceed the ancient, and though there appears an infinite variety of head-dresses upon busts, statues, and medals, yet it is learnedly debated, among the antiquaries, whether the Roman ladies were so costly in that point as the English. For the credit of the *Tete*, I beg leave to add, that it is of a very ancient original, and is known to have made its appearance among consuls and dictators.

same, do I say, even greater encouragement than modesty and virtue? Regulus is a glaring instance of this truth, who, from a state of indigence, has, by a train of the most villanous actions, acquired such immense riches, that he once told me, upon consulting the omens to know how soon he should be worth sixty millions of sesterces,* he found them so favourable as to portend he should possess double that sum. And possibly he may, if he continue thus to dictate wills for other people; a sort of fraud, in my estimation, of all others the most infamous. Farewell.

* About L. 430,000 of our money.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK THIRD.

LETTER I.

TO CALVISIUS.

I NEVER spent my time more agreeably, I think, than lately with Spurinna. I am so much pleased with the uninterrupted regularity of his way of life, that if ever I should arrive at old age, there is no man whom I would sooner choose for my model. I look upon an orderly arrangement of the affairs of life, especially at that advanced period, with the same sort of pleasure as I behold the settled course of the heavenly bodies. In youth, indeed, there is a certain deviation from precise rule, by no means unbecoming; but in age, when business is unseasonable, and ambition indecent, all should be composed and uniform. This maxim Spurinna religiously pursues throughout his whole conduct. Even in those transactions which one might call minute and inconsiderable, did they not occur every day, he observes a certain periodical season and method. The first part of the morning he devotes to study; at eight he dresses, and walks

about three miles, in which he enjoys, at once, contemplation and exercise. At his return, if he has any friends with him in his house, he enters upon some entertaining and interesting topic of conversation; if he is alone, some book is read to him; and sometimes, too, even when he has visitors, if agreeable to the company. He then reposes himself; and, after this, either takes up a book, or falls into some discourse, even more entertaining and instructive. He afterwards takes the air in his chariot, either with his wife, (who is a lady of uncommon merit) or with some friend; a happiness which lately was mine.—How agreeable, how delightful is the enjoyment of him in that hour of privacy! You would fancy you were hearing some worthy of ancient times, inflaming your breast with the most heroic examples, and instructing your mind with the most exalted precepts, which, yet, he delivers with so modest an air, that it has not the least appearance of dictating. When he has thus taken a tour of about seven miles, he gets out of his chariot, and walks a mile more, after which he returns home, and either reposes himself, or retires to his study. He has an excellent taste for poetry, and composes lyric odes, both in Greek and Latin, with great elegance. It is surprising what a sweet flow of numbers, and what a spirit of gaiety runs through his verses, which the venerable character of the author renders still more pleasing. When the baths are ready, which in winter is about three o'clock, and in summer about two, he undresses himself; and if there happen to be no wind, he walks for some time in the

sun.* After this, he plays a considerable time at tennis; for, by this sort of exercise too, he combats the effects of old age. When he has bathed, he throws himself upon his couch till supper time,† and, in the mean while, some agreeable and entertaining author is read to him. In this, as in all the rest, his friends are at full liberty to partake, or to employ themselves in any other manner more suitable to their inclination. You lie down to an elegant, yet frugal repast, which is served up in antique plate of pure silver. He has, likewise, a complete service in Corinthian metal,‡ which though he admires as a curiosity, is far from being his passion. At his table, he is frequently entertained with the recital of some dramatic piece, so that even his very meals are a feast to the understanding; and though he continues at supper, even in summer, till the night is somewhat advanced, yet he prolongs the repast with so much affability and

* See Book vi. let. 16. note.

† This was the principal meal among the Romans, at which all their feasts and invitations were made; they usually began it about their 9th hour, answering pretty nearly to our three o'clock in the afternoon. But as Spurinna, we find, did not enter upon the exercises which always preceded this meal, till the eighth or ninth hour, if we allow about three hours for that purpose, he could not lie down to table till toward six or seven o'clock. See Let. 5. of this Book, in note, p. 127.

‡ This metal, whatever it was composed of (for that point is by no means clear,) was so highly esteemed among the ancients, that they preferred it even to gold:

Æraque ab Isthmiacis auro potiora favillis.

Stat. Sylv. 2.

Corinthian brass, more precious far than gold.

politeness, that none of his guests ever think it tedious. By this method of living, he has preserved all his senses entire, and his body active and vigorous, to his 78th year, without discovering any symptoms of old age, but the wisdom. This is the sort of life which I ardently aspire after; and I purpose to enjoy it, when I shall arrive at those years which will justify a retreat from active occupations. In the mean while, I am embarrassed with a thousand affairs, in which Spurinna is, at once, my support and my example: for he, likewise, as long as it became him, entered into all the duties of public life. It was by passing through the various offices of the state, by governing provinces, and by indefatigable labours, that he merited the repose he now enjoys. I propose to myself the same course, and the same limits; and I here give it to you under my hand, that I do so. If an ill-timed ambition should carry me beyond those bounds, produce this letter against me; and condemn me to repose, whenever I may enjoy it without being reproached with indolence. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO MAXIMUS.

I THINK I may claim a right to ask the same services of you for my friends, as I would offer to yours if I had the same opportunity. Arianus Maturius is a person of great eminence among the Altinates.* When I say this, it is not with respect

* Altino, in the Venetian territories, now destroyed.

to his fortunes, (which, however, are very considerable ;) it is in allusion to the purity, the integrity, the prudence, and the sanctity of his manners. His counsel guides me in my affairs, and his judgment in my studies ; for truth, honour, and knowledge, are the distinguishing qualities which mark his character. He loves me (and I cannot express his affection in stronger terms) with a tenderness equal to yours. As he is a stranger to the passion of ambition, he is contented with remaining in the equestrian order, when he might easily have advanced himself into a higher rank. It behoves me, however, to endeavour that his merit be rewarded as it deserves ; and I would fain, without his knowledge or expectation, and probably too contrary to his inclination, contribute to his honours. The post I wish to obtain for him is some station of great dignity, and yet attended with no trouble. I beg, when any thing of that nature offers, you would think of him : it will be an obligation, which he and I shall ever remember with the greatest gratitude. For, though he has no aspiring views to gratify, he will be as sensible of the favour, as if he had received it in consequence of his own desires. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO HISPULIA.

IT is not easy to determine, whether my love or esteem were greater, for that wise and excellent man, your father ; but this is most certain, that,

from the respect I bear to *his* memory and your virtues, you are dear to me by the strongest sentiments of affection. Can I fail then to wish (as I shall by every means in my power endeavour,) that your son may copy the virtues of both his grandfathers, particularly his maternal? as indeed his father and his uncle will furnish him also with very illustrious examples. The surest method to train him up in the steps of these respectable men, is early to season his mind with polite learning and useful knowledge: and it is of the last consequence from whom he receives these instructions. Hitherto he has had his education under your eye, and in your house, where he is exposed to few, I should rather say to no wrong impressions. But he is now of an age to be sent from home, and it is time to place him with some professor of rhetoric; of whose discipline and method, but, above all, of whose morals, you may be well satisfied. Amongst the many advantages for which this amiable youth is indebted to nature and fortune, he has that of a most beautiful person: it is necessary, therefore, in this loose and slippery age, to find out one, who will not only be his tutor, but the guardian and protector of his virtue. I will venture to recommend Julius Genitor to you under that character. I love him, I confess, extremely: but my affection does by no means prejudice my judgment; on the contrary, it is, in truth, the effect of it. His behaviour is grave, and his morals irreproachable; perhaps, somewhat too severe and rigid for the libertine manners of these times. His professional qualifications you may learn from many others;

for, the powers of eloquence, as they are open to all the world, are soon discovered; but the qualities of the heart lie more concealed, and out of the reach of common observation: it is on *that* side, therefore, I undertake to be answerable for my friend. Your son will hear nothing from this worthy man, but what will be for his advantage to know, nor learn any thing of which it would be happier he should be ignorant. He will represent to him as often, and with as much zeal, as you or I should, the virtues of his ancestors, and what a glorious weight of illustrious characters he has to support. You will not hesitate, then, to place him with a tutor, whose first care will be to form his manners, and afterwards to instruct him in eloquence; an attainment ill-acquired, if with the neglect of moral improvements. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO MACRINUS.

THOUGH my friends here, as well as the town in general, seem to approve of my conduct in the affair I am going to mention, yet I cannot satisfy myself without knowing your sentiments; and as I wished for your advice before I engaged in it, so I am extremely desirous of your judgment now it is finished. Having obtained leave to be absent from my office as head of the treasury, I went into Tuscany to look after some works which I am carrying on there, for the benefit of that province, at my own expence. In the interval, deputies on the

part of the Bætici arrived with complaints of some grievances they had suffered under the government of Cecilius Classicus; and applied to the senate, that I might be appointed counsel for them. My very worthy and obliging colleagues represented, on my behalf, the necessary engagements of our office, and endeavoured to get me excused. Upon this, the senate passed a decree greatly to my honour: they ordered, that I should be counsel for the province, provided the deputies could obtain my consent. At my return, they were again introduced into the senate, and there renewed their petition in my presence. They conjured me, by that generous assistance I had given them in their cause against Bæbius, and by all the obligations I lay under of supporting my avowed clients, that I would not now desert them. I perceived the senate was inclined to grant this petition, by that general assent which is the usual forerunner of all their decrees. Whereupon I rose, and told the house, that I no longer insisted upon the reasonableness of the excuse I had alledged: and they seemed pleased with the respectful modesty of my answer. I was determined in this resolution, not only because I found it agreeable to the inclinations of the senate (which indeed had great weight with me,) but for many other, though less important, considerations. I reflected, that our ancestors thought themselves obliged to engage voluntarily in defence of those particular persons, with whom they were united by the laws of hospitality;* and that,

* The observation of Eustathius upon the interview of Glaucus and Diomed, in the sixth Iliad, as translated by Mr. Pope, in his

therefore, it would be highly ungenerous to abandon a collective body, to whom I stood in the same relation. Besides, I considered the danger, as well as the fatigue, I went through in the last cause I undertook for this province; and I was unwilling to lose the merit of my former services, by denying their request in the present instance. For such is the disposition of mankind, that the favour you refuse, cancels all you have conferred; and though you oblige them ever so often, they will forget a thousand compliances, and yet remember a single denial. I considered, likewise, that, Classicus being dead, the great objection of exposing a senator was removed; and that, in undertaking this cause, I should merit the same thanks from my clients, as if he were alive, without the hazard of giving offence to any particular person. In a word, I thought, if I complied with their desires on this occasion, I could, with a better grace, deny my assistance to them in any future, where I might have reasons for declining to be their advocate. For all our offices have their limits; and the best way of reserving to ourselves the liberty of refusing where

notes upon that place, will throw a light upon this passage, which may be of service to the English reader. "The laws of hospitality," says he, "were anciently held in great veneration. The friendship contracted thereby was so sacred, that they preferred it to all the bonds of consanguinity and alliance, and accounted it obligatory to the third and fourth generation. We see Diomed and Glaucus agreeing not to be enemies during the whole course of a war, only because their grandfathers had been mutual guests.—They preserved in their familes the presents which had been made on these occasions; as obliged to transmit to their children the memorials of their right of hospitality."

we would, is to comply where we can. Thus, you have heard the motives which influenced me in this transaction: it now remains that you give me your opinion, which I shall receive with equal satisfaction, either as an instance of your sincerity, or a sanction to my conduct. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO MACER.

I HAVE the pleasure to find you are so great an admirer of my uncle's works, as to wish to have a complete collection of them; and, for that purpose, desire me to send you an accoont of all the treatises he wrote. I will point them out to you in the order in which they were composed; for, however immaterial *that* may seem, it is a sort of information not at all unacceptable to men of letters. The first book he published, was a treatise concerning *The Art of using the Javelin on Horseback:* This he wrote when he commanded a troop of horse; and it is drawn up with great accuracy and judgment. *The Life of Pomponius Secundus, in two volumes:* Pomponius had a very great affection for him, and he thought he owed this tribute to his memory. *The History of the Wars in Germany, consisting of twenty books:* In which he gives an account of all the battles we were engaged in against that nation. A dream, which he had, when he served in the army in Germany, first suggested to him the design of this work. He imagined, that Drusus Nero (who extended his conquests very far into that

country, and there lost his life) appeared to him in his sleep, and conjured him not to suffer his memory to be buried in oblivion. He has left us likewise *A Treatise upon Eloquence*, divided into six volumes. In this work, he takes the orator from his cradle, and leads him on till he has carried him up to the highest point of perfection in this art. In the latter part of Nero's reign, when the tyranny of the times made it dangerous to engage in studies of a more free and elevated spirit, he published a piece of criticism in eight books, concerning *Ambiguity in Expression*. He has completed the history which Aufidius Bassus left unfinished, and has added to it thirty books. And, lastly, he has left thirty-seven books upon the subject of *Natural History*: This is a work of great compass and learning, and almost as full of variety as nature herself. You will wonder how a man, so engaged as he was, could find time to compose such a number of books; and some of them too upon abstruse subjects. But your surprise will rise still higher, when you hear, that, for some time, he engaged in the profession of an advocate; that he died in his fifty-sixth year; that, from the time of his quitting the bar, to his death, he was employed partly in the execution of the highest posts, and partly in a personal attendance on those emperors who honoured him with their friendship. But he had a quick apprehension joined to unwearied application. In summer, he always began his studies as soon as it was night;*

* The distribution of time, among the Romans, was extremely different from the method in use amongst us. They measured the night into four equal parts, which they called *watches*, each

in winter, generally at one in the morning, but never later than two, and often at midnight. No man ever spent less time in bed; insomuch, that he would sometimes, without retiring from his book, take a short sleep, and then pursue his studies. Before day-break, he used to wait upon Vespasian, who likewise chose that season to transact business. When he had finished the affairs which that emperor committed to his charge, he returned home again to his studies. After a short and light repast at noon (agreeably to the good old custom of our ancestors,) he would frequently, in the summer, if disengaged from business, repose himself in the sun; during which time some author was read to him, from whence he made extracts and observations; as indeed this was his constant method whatever book he read; for it was a maxim of his, that, "no book was so bad, but something might be learnt from it." When this was over, he generally went into the cold bath, and as soon as he came out of it, just took a slight refreshment, and then reposed himself for a little while. Thus, as if it had been a new day, he immediately resumed his

containing the space of three hours; and part of these they devoted either to the pleasures of the table, or to study. The natural day they divided into twelve hours, the first beginning with sun-rise, and the last ending with sun-set; by which means their hours were of unequal length, varying according to the different seasons of the year. The time for business began with sun-rise, and continued to the fifth hour, being that of dinner, which, with them, was only a slight repast. From thence to the seventh hour was a time of repose; a custom which still prevails in Italy. The eighth hour was employed in bodily exercises; after which they constntly bathed, and from thence went to supper.

studies till supper-time, when a book was again read to him, upon which he would make some hasty remarks. I remember once, his reader having pronounced a word wrong, somebody at the table made him repeat it again; upon which my uncle asked his friend if he understood it? Who acknowledging that he did: "Why then," said he, "would you make him go back again? We have lost, by this interruption, above ten lines:" so covetous was this great man of time! In summer, he always rose from supper by day-light; and, in winter, as soon as it was dark: and he observed this rule as strictly as if it had been a law of the state. Such was his manner of life amidst the noise and hurry of the town: but in the country his whole time was devoted to study, without intermission, excepting only when he bathed. In this exception, I include no more than the time he was actually in the bath; for, while he was rubbed and wiped, he was employed either in hearing some book read to him, or in dictating. In his journies, he lost no time from his studies, but his mind, at those seasons, being disengaged from all other business, applied itself wholly to that single pursuit. A secretary* constantly attended him in his chariot, who, in the

* The word, in the original, implies a person who wrote short hand; an art which the Romans carried to its highest perfection, as appears from the following epigram:

Currant verba licet, manus est velocius illis;
Nondum lingua suum, dextra peregit opus.

Mart. 14, 208.

Swift though the words, the pen still swifter sped;
The hand has finished, ere the tongue has said.

winter, wore a particular sort of warm gloves, that the sharpness of the weather might not occasion any interruption to my uncle's studies; and, for the same reason, when in Rome, he was always carried in a chair. I remember he once reproved me for walking: "You might," said he, "employ those hours to more advantage:" for he thought every hour lost that was not given to study. By this extraordinary application, he found time to compose the several treatises I have mentioned, besides one hundred and sixty volumes which he left me by his will, consisting of a kind of common-place, written on both sides, in a very small character; so that one might fairly reckon the number considerably more. I have heard him say, that when he was comptroller of the revenue in Spain, Largius Licinius offered him four hundred thousand sesterces* for these manuscripts; and yet they were not then quite so numerous. When you reflect upon the books he has read, and the volumes he has written, are you not inclined to suspect, that he never was engaged in the affairs of the public, or the service of his prince? On the other hand, when you are informed how indefatigable he was in his studies, are you not disposed to wonder, that he read and wrote no more? For, on one side, what obstacles would not the business of a court throw in his way? And, on the other, what is it that such intense application might not perform? I cannot but smile, therefore, when I hear myself called a studious man, who, in comparison to him, am an

* About L. 3200 of our money.

arrant loiterer. But why do I mention myself, who am diverted from these pursuits, by numberless affairs, both public and private? Even they, whose lives are devoted to study, must blush to appear as mere idlers, when compared with him. I have run out my letter, I perceive, beyond the extent I at first designed, which was only to inform you, as you desired, what treatises he has left behind him. But I trust this will not be less acceptable to you than the books themselves, as it may, possibly, not only raise your curiosity to read his works, but your emulation to copy his example, by some attempts of the same nature. Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO SEVERUS.

I HAVE lately purchased, with a legacy that was left me, a statue of Corinthian brass. It is small, indeed, but well executed, at least, if I have any judgment; which, most certainly in matters of this sort, as perhaps in all others, is extremely defective. However, I think I have a taste to discover the beauties of this figure: as it is naked, the faults, if there be any, as well as the perfections, are more observable. It represents an old man in an erect attitude. The bones, the muscles, the veins, and wrinkles, are so strongly expressed, that you would imagine the figure to be animated. The character is well preserved throughout every part of the body: the hair is thin, the forehead broad, the face shrivelled, the throat lank,

the arms languid, the breast fallen, and the belly sunk; as the whole turn and air of the figure behind is expressive of old age. It appears to be antique, from the colour of the brass. In short, it is a performance so highly finished, as to merit the attention of the most curious, and to afford, at the same time, pleasure to the most common observer: and this induced me, who am an absolute novice in this art, to buy it. But I did so, not with any intent of placing it in my own house, (for I have nothing of that kind there) but with a design of fixing it in some conspicuous place in my native province, perhaps in the temple of Jupiter: for it is a present well worthy of a temple and a god. I desire, therefore, you would, with that care with which you always execute my requests, give immediate orders for a pedestal to be made for it. I leave the choice of the marble to you, but let my name be engraven upon it, and, if you think proper, my titles. I will send the statue by the first opportunity; or, possibly, (which, I am sure, you will like better) I may bring it myself: for I intend, if I can find leisure, to make an excursion to you. This is a piece of news which, I know, you will rejoice to hear; but you will soon change your countenance, when I tell you my visit will be only for a few days; for the same business, that now detains me here, will prevent my making a longer stay. Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO CANINUS.

I AM just now informed, that Silius Italicus has starved himself to death, at his villa near Naples. Having been afflicted with a cancerous humour, which was deemed incurable, he grew weary of life, under such painful circumstances, and therefore put an end to it, with the most determined courage. He had been extremely fortunate through the whole course of his days, excepting only the death of his youngest son; however, that loss was made up to him, in the satisfaction of seeing his eldest, who is of a more amiable character, attain the consular dignity, and of leaving him in a very flourishing situation. He suffered in his character during the time of Nero, having been suspected of being willingly concerned in some of the informations which were carried on in the reign of that prince; but he made use of his interest with Vitellius, with great discretion and humanity. He acquired much honour by his administration of the government of Asia; and by his approved conduct, after his retirement from public business, cleared his character from that stain which his former intrigues had thrown upon it. He lived as a private nobleman, without power, and consequently without envy. Though he was frequently confined to his bed, and always to his chamber, yet he was highly respected, and much visited; not with an interested view, but merely on account of his

merit. He employed his time between conversing with men of letters, and composing verses; which he sometimes recited, in order to try the opinion of the public: but he discovered in them more industry than genius. In the decline of his years, he entirely quitted Rome, and lived altogether in Campania, from whence even the accession of the new emperor* could not draw him: a circumstance which I mention as well to the honour of the prince, who was not displeased with his taking that liberty, as of Italicus, who was not afraid to make use of it. He was reproached with indulging his taste for the fine arts at an immoderate expence. He had several villas in the same province; and the last purchase was always the chief favourite, to the neglect of all the rest. They were furnished with large collections of books, statues, and pictures, which he more than enjoyed, he even adored; particularly the statue of Virgil, of whom he was so passionate an admirer, that he celebrated the anniversary of that poet's birth-day with more solemnity than his own; especially at Naples, where he used to approach his tomb† with as much veneration as if it had been a temple. In this state

* Trajan.

† Travellers are still shown a monument near Naples, which is called Virgil's tomb. But Mr. Addison "thinks it almost certain, that this tomb stood on the other side of the town, which looks towards mount Vesuvio." Addison's Travels, p. 164.—Mabillon, in his *Mus. Ital.* p.112, says, the following epitaph was dug up there:

Sistite viatores quæso, pauca legite:
Hic situs est Maro!

Stay, travellers, I beg, and read this short inscription:
Here lies Maro!

of tranquillity he lived to the seventy-fifth year of his age, with a delicate rather than infirm constitution. As he was the last person upon whom Nero conferred the consular office (that prince being killed during his consulship,) so he was the last also that survived of all those who had been raised by him to that dignity. When I consider this circumstance, I cannot forbear lamenting the transitory condition of mankind. Is there any thing in nature so short and limited as human life, even in its most extended period? Does it not seem to you but yesterday that Nero existed? And yet not one of all those who were consuls in his reign now remains! But why should I wonder at an event so common? Lucius Piso (the father of that Piso, who was infamously assassinated by Valerius Festus in Africa) used to say, he did not see one person in the senate,* who sat in that house when he was consul: such multitudes are swept away in so short a space! I am, therefore, so far from thinking those remarkable tears of Xerxes need any apology, that, in my judgment, history does honour to his character, which informs us, that, when this prince had attentively surveyed his immense army, he could not forbear weeping, from the reflection, that so many thousand lives would so soon be extinct. The more ardent, therefore, should our endeavours be to lengthen out this short portion of existence, if not by achievements of glory (for occasions of that kind are not in our power,) yet, however, by those of literary honour; and since it is not granted us to live long,

*The number of senators, as regulated by Augustus, was 600.

let us transmit to posterity some memorial, that we have at least LIVED. I well know, you want not my excitement; but the warmth of my affection inclines me to instigate you in the course you are actually pursuing; as I have often been encouraged to proceed in mine by your exhortations. Happy contention, when two friends thus strive, who shall animate each other most in their mutual pursuits of immortal fame! Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO TRANQUILLUS.

THE obliging manner in which you desire me to confer the military tribunate* upon your relation, which I had obtained of the most illustrious† Neratius Marcellus for yourself, is agreeable to that respect with which you always treat me. As it would have given me great pleasure to have seen you in that post, so it will not be less acceptable to me to have it bestowed upon the person you recommend: for hardly, I think, would it be consistent to wish the advancement of a friend's honours, and yet envy him the noblest of all distinctions, that of a generous and an affectionate relation. To deserve preferment, and to bestow it, is a glorious character: and it will be yours, if you resign to your friend what is due to your own merit. Of this glory I too shall partake; when the world

* See Book 4. Let. 4. note.

† This was a title given to all senators, in the times of the latter emperors.

shall know, by the present instance, that my friends are not only raised to the tribuneship, but have the power also to confer it. I readily, therefore, comply with your generous request; and, as your name is not yet entered upon the roll, I can, without difficulty, insert that of Silvanus in its stead. May he accept this good office at your hands with the same graceful disposition, as I am sure you will receive it from mine! Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO MINUTIANUS.

I AM now at leisure to inform you of the great fatigue I underwent in defence of the province of Bætica: a cause which turned upon a variety of questions, and took up several days in hearing. Cæcilius Classicus was governor of Bætica, the year that Marius Priscus administered the same office in Africa. Cæcilius was a man of a base, abandoned character, and had exercised his authority with great violence and oppression. He was a native of Africa, as Priscus was of Bætica; in allusion to which, the latter people used archly to say, (for a strong sense of injuries often gives a certain poignancy to the expression of one's feelings) *we are paid in our own coin.** The only difference

* This seem to be one of those passages to which it is impossible, not only for a translator to do justice, but perhaps, even for the most skilful in the original language to enter into its true spirit. The expression, in its primary sense, implies no more than this: "I have received a wound, and returned it;" *(Dedi malum et accepi;)*

between them was, that Marius was prosecuted on the part of a single city, as also by several private persons; whereas, the charge against Classicus was brought in the name of the whole united province of Bætica. He escaped, however, the consequences of this impeachment, either by an accidental or voluntary death, I know not which. It is certain, at least, the world imputed to him the disgrace of the latter; though I must confess that point is to me extremely doubtful. For as, on the one hand, it is reasonable to suppose, that any man would rather choose to die than be arraigned on a charge from which he could not clear himself; so, on the other, it is surprising, that he, who was not ashamed to commit the crimes of which he was accused, should yet prefer death to the disgrace of a public conviction. Nevertheless, the Bætici persisted in going on with the prosecution against him. This privilege, which the laws admit, was now, after

in which there does not appear even the faintest shadow of wit or raillery. An instance of the same kind occurs in Book 4. Let. 11. where our author commends a sarcasm of Valerius Licinianus, as the most severe and spirited imaginable, though there seems to be little in it to deserve that character. In both cases, it is highly probable, that the force of the raillery consisted either in some allusion, which we cannot discover at this distance; or the words themselves, perhaps, might, by some double meaning, carry a sense when they were spoken, which is now lost. Nor is it to be wondered we should be under a difficulty of this kind, when the Romans themselves, as Quinctilian informs us, were, even in his time, at a loss to discover the true humour of several of Cicero's occasional *Bons Mots*, in that collection of them which were then extant; and that penetrating critic assures us, that though many had endeavoured to clear up and explain the force and propriety of them, the attempt had always proved unsuccessful. *Quinct.* l. 6. c. 3.

long disuse, revived. They went farther, and insisted, that his accomplices should likewise be proceeded against at the same time. I was counsel for the province, together with Lucceius Albinus. He is a copious and elegant speaker; and though I always loved the man, yet the being joined with him in this cause, has considerably heightened my affection. There is something in the pursuit of fame, especially of the oratorical kind, that is selfish, unsociable, and jealous of participation; but there was no rivalship between us, and we united our common efforts in this trial, without being mutually excited by any envious contention to display superior talents. We thought the point in question was of too much importance, and of too complicated a nature, for each of us to be limited to a single speech; being apprehensive we should neither have strength, nor time, to make good our charge against so many parties, if we comprised them all under one general accusation. Such a variety of persons and facts would be apt to confound, as well as weary, the attention of the judges. Besides, in that collective way of proceeding, either the interest of some might prove a protection to all the rest; or, the most inconsiderable of the party might be sacrificed to the justice of their country, in order to favour the escape of those of a more conspicuous rank: for partiality never exerts itself with more success, than when it is concealed under the specious appearance of severity. We remembered the advice of Sertorius, who directed the strongest soldier to tear off the horse's tail at once, and the weakest to pull it off hair by

hair.—But you know the story*. In the same manner, we thought we had no other way to cope with such a numerous body of criminals, but by attacking them singly. Our first and principal point was to prove Classicus guilty, which would prepare the way to his accomplices; for, till that was done, it would not be possible to fix any charge upon the latter. Amongst these, we singled out Bæbius Probus, and Fabius Hispanus, whom we thought it advisable to arraign immediately after Classicus; these persons being considerable, by their interest, and Hispanus, in particular, by his eloquence. There was no difficulty in proving the allegations against Classicus; for there was found among his memorandums, an account, under his own hand, of the several sums he had taken, and upon what occasions. A letter was also produced, which he sent to a certain favourite mistress of his at Rome, wherein he expresses himself in these words: "Rejoice with me, for I am preparing to

* The story, as related by Valerius Maximus, is to this purpose: Sertorius being proscribed by Sylla, put himself at the head of the Lusitani. These people, upon a certain occasion, were for attacking, at once, the whole Roman army, greatly superior to them in numbers. Sertorius endeavoured to dissuade them, by all the arguments in his power, from so rash a purpose; but finding his oratory prevailed nothing, he ordered two horses to be brought before him, and calling a young lusty soldier, and worn out veteran, he directed the former to pull off the horse's tail at once, and the other by degrees. The consequence was, the young man exerted all his strength in vain, while the old fellow performed his task. Thus, says that author, these rude, ungovernable people, who were running headlong to their destruction, were convinced, by this visible representation, of the justness of that advice, which had no influence upon them in the way of reasoning. *Val. Max.* l. 7. c. 6.

return to you; and, in such a manner, as to have nothing to fear from my creditors, having raised four millions of sesterces* upon the Bætici." But it cost us much time and pains to make good the articles against Hispanus and Probus. Before I entered upon the particular accusations against these, I thought it necessary to prove, that, to be the agents and ministers of a governor, in matters manifestly unjust, was, in itself, criminal. For, they did not attempt to deny the fact, but pleaded, in excuse, that they were officers under Classicus, and therefore obliged to obey his orders. Claudius Restitutus, who was counsel on their side, has often assured me, he never was more perplexed and disconcerted than when he perceived I had seized this post, in which he had placed all his strength and confidence; though no man is more expert and vigilant in his profession, or more prepared against a surprise. The senate decreed, that an account should be taken of the effects Classicus possessed before he went to his government; that these should be given to his daughter; and directed the overplus to be divided among the unhappy sufferers. The decree added, that his creditors should refund whatever monies they had received since his return. Hispanus and Probus were sentenced to be banished for five years: so very atrocious did that conduct now appear, which seemed, at first, to be doubted, whether it was criminal or not. A few days afterwards we proceeded against Clavius Fuscus, who married the daughter of Clas-

* About L. 32,000 of our money.

sicus, and Stillonius Priscus, who commanded a regiment under him; but the respective events were very different: for the former was acquitted, and the latter banished Italy for two years. At the third hearing, we thought it expedient to join several accomplices in one general charge, lest, by protracting this affair any longer, the patience of even the judges themselves would be quite worn out and exhausted by fatigue. We had, indeed, designedly reserved the most inconsiderable of the persons concerned to this day, the wife of Classicus only excepted, against whom, though there was strong suspicion, the proofs were by no means thought clear: as to his daughter, who was likewise in the number of the accused, there was not the least ground for any charge against her. When therefore, in the close of the pleadings, I was to take notice of the latter, I thought it would ill become me to bear head upon one who appeared to be innocent; and therefore I spoke very fully and freely in her vindication. Indeed, as this impeachment was now drawing to a conclusion, there was no danger that this last circumstance would take off from the weight of the accusation against her father, as it might, if I had defended her in the outset of the cause. I addressed myself to the deputies, and desired they would tell me if they had any thing to alledge against her, which they thought they could prove; and appealed to the senate, whether I ought to employ my talents, if, in truth, I had any, to the destruction of an innocent person: and I concluded with saying, "But, perhaps, I shall be asked, if I take upon myself to act as a

judge? By no means: I consider myself, however, as an advocate chosen from amidst that venerable body."

Thus ended this prosecution, in which so many parties were involved; some of whom were acquitted, but the greater number condemned, either to perpetual banishment, or for a limited time. The senate were pleased, in the same decree, to honour us with a most ample testimony of our diligence, fidelity, and resolute perseverance in the conduct of this important business: the only reward we could have received equal to the very laborious office we had sustained. You will easily conceive the fatigue we underwent in speaking and debating so long and so often, and in interrogating, assisting, or confuting such a number of witnesses; as well as what a difficult and disagreeable task we had, to withstand the private solicitations, and public opposition of the friends of the several persons accused. To give you an instance: one of the judges themselves, who thought I pressed too hard upon a defendant whom he favoured, could not forbear interrupting me; "Give me leave," said I, "to go on; for when I shall have said all I meant to say, he will still be as innocent as he was before." From hence you will collect what a scene of contention I went through, and what enemies I brought upon myself. However, it was but for a season. For, though an honest discharge of one's duty may, for the time, offend those it opposes; yet it will, at last, be justified and admired, even by the very men who suffer from it.

Thus I have laid before you, in the clearest manner I am able, this whole transaction. You will regret, perhaps, the reading of so long a letter, and tell me it was scarce worth the trouble. Ask me then no more what is doing at Rome; and remember, in my excuse, that, considering the time this trial took up, the great number of persons concerned, and the several proceedings against them, my letter is of no unreasonable length; and I really think I have related the whole with as much brevity as exactness.—But, upon recollection, I must recall that last word: for I perceive, a little too late indeed, that I have omitted a material circumstance. However, I will mention it here, though somewhat out of its place. In this I have the example of Homer, and several other great names, to keep me in countenance; and the critics will tell you, this inverted manner of relating facts has its beauties: but, upon my word, it is a beauty I had not at all in view. One of the witnesses, whether in resentment that he was summoned contrary to his inclination, or that he was suborned by some of the parties accused, to weaken the credit of the charge, desired leave to exhibit articles against Norbanus Licinianus, one of the deputies, and a commissioner appointed to carry on the present prosecution; alledging, that he had prevaricated* in his charge against Casta, the wife of Classicus. The law directs, that the party accused shall

* A prevaricator is defined, by the civilians, to be one that betrays the cause to the adversary, and turns on the criminal's side, whom he ought to prosecute.

be first proceeded against, before any information shall be received to the prejudice of the person who brings the charge; because, how far the information is to be credited, will best appear from the manner in which the original cause is conducted. But so extremely odious was Norbanus, that neither the authority of the laws, nor a regard to his public function, could protect him. He was a man of an infamous character, who, like many others, had used his interest with Domitian to very flagitious purposes. He was appointed one of the commissioners by the province to manage this trial, not because they had any opinion of his integrity, but as being a declared enemy to Classicus, by whom he had been banished. Norbanus desired he might have time allowed him for his defence, and a copy of the articles of his accusation; both which were refused him, and he was ordered to answer immediately to the charge. He did so; and when I consider the genius and character of the man, I know not whether I should say, with great confidence, or great spirit, but undoubtedly without the least embarrassment. There were many articles alledged against him, much more to his disadvantage than the crime with which he was particularly charged. Among the rest, Pomponius Rufus, and Libo Frugi, persons of consular dignity, deposed, that he was counsel, in the reign of Domitian, for those infamous wretches, who had informed against Salvius Liberalis. In short, Norbanus was condemned and banished. When, therefore, I entered upon the charge against Casta, I insisted singly upon this sentence against Norba-

nus. But I urged this to little purpose; for, by a very unprecedented, and, indeed, a contradictory way of proceeding, the person accused was acquitted, while he, who had entered into this combination in her favour, was condemned. You will be curious to be informed how we, who were counsel against her, acted in this extraordinary conjuncture. We acquainted the senate, that, as we had received all our information from Norbanus, we could not, if he should be convicted of collusion with this woman, proceed without new instructions: having said this, we sat down during his whole trial, without interposing. Norbanus, after his conviction, continued present every day throughout the remainder of the proceedings, and preserved the same firmness, or unembarrassed countenance, to the last. And here, upon reviewing my letter, I find I have been guilty of another omission. I should have told you, that Salvius Liberalis inveighed strongly against the rest of the deputies; insisting, that they had betrayed the trust reposed in them by the province, and had not brought to justice all the parties they were directed to prosecute. As he is a man of great warmth of temper and much eloquence, they were really in some danger. But I took those worthy persons under my protection, and they are so grateful as to acknowledge I saved them from the storm with which they were threatened. And now, my friend, I will put an end to my letter in good earnest; nor detain you with adding a syllable more, even though I should find that some circumstances have still escaped me. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO SPURINNA AND COCCIA.*

I DID not, it is true, acquaint you, at my last visit, that I had composed something in praise of your son; because it was not written in order to be mentioned, but merely as a private tribute of affection to his memory, and as a consolation to me in my concern for the loss of him. Besides, my dear Spurinna, as you told me you heard I had read some piece to certain friends, I imagined you were informed, at the same time, of the subject; and I was unwilling to cast a gloom upon your cheerfulness in that season of gaiety in which I found you, by recalling to your remembrance so severe a misfortune. I have even still some doubt, whether I should only send you what I then recited, as you desire, or join with it what I design for another essay: for a small tract was not only insufficient to give due scope to the sentiments of my heart, and to comprise the full offerings I would pay to one whose memory I so infinitely love and honour; but it seemed also more for the interest of his fame, to have it thus disseminated by separate pieces. But the consideration, that it will be treating you with a more friendly confidence to transmit to you the whole now, rather than reserve part of it to another time, has determined me to do so; especially as you have assured me, you will not part

* Spurinna's wife.

with it out of your hands till I shall think proper to publish it. I beg you to give me a proof of the same unreserve, by pointing out to me what you shall judge would be best altered, omitted, or added. It is difficult (and I know it by what I feel myself) for a mind in affliction to attend to such little cares. However, as you would direct a painter or statuary, who was representing the figure of your son, what parts he should retouch or express; so I hope you will guide and inform my hand in this more durable, or (as you are pleased to think it) this immortal picture of his mind, which I am endeavouring to draw: for, the nearer it shall resemble the original, and the more finished it shall be, so much the more lasting it is likely to prove. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO JULIUS GENITOR.

IT is the generous disposition of Artemidorus to heighten the good offices of his friends; and in that light you must look upon those strong professions he makes of his obligations to me. It is true, indeed, when the philosophers were expelled* Rome, I visited him at his house near the city; and I ran the greater hazard in paying him that civility, as I was at that time prætor; I likewise supplied him with a considerable sum to discharge some debts

* Domitian banished the philosophers not only from Rome, but Italy, as Suetonius and A. Gellius inform us: among these was the celebrated Epictetus.

he had contracted upon very honourable occasions, though I was obliged to borrow the money myself; while his other friends, who, both in power and fortune, were capable of assisting him, stood coldly at a distance, without contributing any relief to his distress. This I did under the discouraging instances before my eyes of the sufferings of seven of my friends; Senecio, Rusticus, and Helvidius, being just then put to death, at the same time that Mauricus, Gratilla, Arria, and Fennia, were sent into exile: and scorched as I was with the lightning of the state, which thus flashed round me, I had great reason to expect it would not be long before it destroyed me too. But I do not deem myself, upon that account, as meriting the high encomiums my friend bestows upon me: all I pretend to is, that I was not guilty of the infamous meanness of abandoning him in his misfortunes. I had, as far as the difference of our ages would admit, a friendship for his father-in-law Musonius, whom I both loved and esteemed. Artemidorus himself I made acquaintance with when I was military tribune in Syria, where I entered into the strictest intimacy with him. And I consider it as a proof that there was something right in my disposition, by having so early discovered the merit of this amiable man, who, if he is not a philosopher, exceedingly resembles one; I am sure, at least, of all those who take upon themselves that title, I know none of a more sincere and unaffected integrity. I forbear to mention how he endures the extremities of heat and cold, how indefatigable in labour, how abstemious in the pleasures of the

table, and how absolutely he restrains all his appetites; for these qualities, remarkable as they would certainly be in any other character, are rendered less conspicuous in him, by the superior lustre of those more extraordinary virtues which recommended him to Musonius for a son-in-law, in preference to so many others of all ranks who paid their addresses to his daughter. I cannot, therefore, but be highly sensible of the advantageous terms in which he speaks of me to every body, and particularly to you. But I am apprehensive (to return to the observation with which I set out,) that the warmth of his benevolence may carry him beyond the bounds I deserve: for he, who is so free from all other errors, is extremely apt to fall into the good-natured one, of over-rating the merit of his friends. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO CATILIUS.

I ACCEPT of your invitation to supper; but I must make this agreement beforehand, that you dismiss me soon, and treat me frugally. Let our entertainment abound only in philosophical conversation, and even that too with moderation. There are certain offices which bring passengers into the streets at midnight, and which Cato himself could not safely fall in with; though I must confess, at the same time, that Julius Cæsar,* when

* Julius Cæsar wrote an invective against Cato of Utica, to which, it is probable, Pliny here alludes.

he reproaches him with that circumstance, exalts the character he meant to expose: for he describes those persons who met this reeling patriot, as blushing when they discovered who he was; and adds, "you would have thought that Cato had detected them, and not they Cato." Could he place the dignity of Cato in a stronger light, than by representing him thus venerable even in his cups? As for ourselves, nevertheless, let temperance not only spread our table, but regulate our hours: for we are not arrived at so exalted a reputation, that our enemies cannot censure our conduct without applauding it at the same time. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO ROMANUS.

I HAVE sent you, as you desired, the panegyric I delivered in my late consulship, in honour of our most excellent emperor;* and I intended to have sent it though you had not made the request. I could wish, when you peruse this performance, you would reflect upon the difficulty, as well as the dignity of the subject. In other compositions, where the reader is not acquainted with the circumstances upon which they turn, the novelty of them engages his chief attention; but in a topic so known and exhausted as the present, he has nothing to divert him from considering the style and manner of his author; and the writer has a hard task to please

* Trajan.

his readers, when the whole force of their criticism is solely directed to those single points. But I should be glad that the arrangement, the metaphors, and connections, which I have employed in this discourse, might be particularly observed. A strong imagination, and pompous expression, will sometimes break out in the most unpolished writer; but regularity in the plan of a work, and propriety in the figures, are the distinguishing characteristics of an improved and correct genius. The shining and the elevated are not always to be affected. As shades in a picture show the luminous parts to more advantage, so the plain and simple, in writing, recommend and heighten the sublime. But I forget that I am talking to one, who is so complete a judge of these matters. I should rather beg of you to point out to me what you shall think requires correction: for, if I should find that you dislike some parts, I shall be more inclined to believe you approve of the rest. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO ACILIUS.

THE atrocious treatment which Largius Macedo, a person of prætorian rank, lately received from his slaves, is so extremely tragical, that it deserves to be the subject of a more considerable narrative than a private letter: though, at the same time, it must be acknowledged, there was a haughtiness and severity in his behaviour towards them, which shewed him little mindful that his own father

was once in the same servile state. They surrounded him as he was bathing at his villa near Formiæ, and some beat him about the face and head, whilst others trampled upon his breast, his belly, and his privy parts: when they imagined they had thus completed their intentions, they threw him upon the burning pavement of the hot bath, to try if there was any remaining life left in him. He lay there stretched out, and motionless, either as being really senseless, or only counterfeiting; upon which they concluded him actually dead. In this condition they brought him out, pretending that he was suffocated by the heat of the bath. Some of his more trusty servants received him, and the alarm being spread through the family, his concubines ran to him with the most violent shrieks. The noise of their cries, together with the fresh air, brought him a little to himself, and he gave signs (as he now safely might) that he was not quite dead. The murderers immediately made their escape; but the greater part of them are taken, and they are in pursuit of the rest. By proper application, he was, with great difficulty, kept alive for a few days, and then expired; having, however, the satisfaction, before he died, of knowing, that just vengeance would be inflicted on his assassins. Thus you see, to what indignities, outrages, and dangers, we are exposed. Lenity and good treatment is no security from the villanies of one's servants; for it is malice, and not reflection, that arms such ruffians against their masters. So much for this piece of news: and now, I think, I am exhausted. But you will be apt, I imagine, to

ask, "Is this all?" In truth it is; otherwise, you should have it; for my paper and my time too, (as it is a holiday with me,) will allow me to add more. Upon recollection, however, I can tell you one farther circumstance relating to Macedo, which just now occurs to me. As he was once in a public bath at Rome, a singular, and (as it should seem by the manner of his death) an ominous accident happened to him. A slave of Macedo's, in order to make way for his master, laid his hand gently upon a Roman knight, who, suddenly turning round, by mistake, gave Macedo so violent a blow, that he almost knocked him down. Thus the bath seems to have been fatal to him by a kind of gradation; for, first, he received an indignity in one bath, and was afterwards assassinated in another. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO PROCULUS.

YOU desire me to read your poems during my recess, and to examine whether they are fit for public view; and, after requesting me to turn some of my leisure hours from my own studies to yours, you remind me, that Tully was remarkable for his generous encouragement and patronage of poetical geniuses. But you did not do me justice, if you supposed I wanted either intreaty or example upon this occasion, who not only worship the Muses with the most religious veneration, but have also the warmest friendship for yourself: I shall there-

fore do what you require, with equal pleasure and attention. I believe I may venture to declare, before hand, that your performance has great merit, and ought by no means to be suppressed; at least, that was my opinion when I heard you recite it: if, indeed, your skilful manner of reading, and sweetness of elocution, did not impose upon my judgment. I trust, however, the charming cadence did not entirely overcome the force of my criticism; it might, possibly, a little soften its severity, but could not totally turn its edge. I think, therefore, I may safely pronounce this my opinion of your poems in general: what they are in their several parts, I shall judge when I read them. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO NEPOS.

I HAVE frequently observed, that amongst the noble actions and remarkable sayings of distinguished persons in either sex, those which have been most celebrated have not always been the most worthy of admiration; and I am confirmed in this opinion, by a conversation I had yesterday with Fannia. This lady is grand-daughter to that famous Arria, who animated her husband to meet death, by her own glorious example. She informed me of several particulars relating to Arria, not less heroical than this applauded action of her's, though less the subject of general renown; and which, I am persuaded, will raise her as much in

your admiration as they did in mine. Her husband, Cæcinna Pætus, and her son, were each attacked at the same time with a dangerous illness, of which the son died. This youth, who had a most beautiful person and amiable behaviour, was not less endeared to his parents by his virtues than by the ties of affection. His mother managed his funeral so privately, that Pætus did not know of his death. Whenever she came into his bed-chamber, she pretended her son was better; and, as often as he enquired concerning his health, she answered, he had rested well, or had eaten with an appetite. When she found she could no longer restrain her grief, but her tears were gushing out, she would leave the room, and, having given vent to her passion, return again with dry eyes, and a serene countenance, as if she had dismissed every sentiment of sorrow at her entrance. Her resolution,* no doubt, was truly noble, when, drawing the

* The story, as mentioned by several of the ancient historians, is to this purpose: Pætus having joined Scribonianus, who was in arms, in Illyria, against Claudius, was taken after the death of the latter, and condemned to death. Arria having, in vain, solicited his life, persuaded him to destroy himself, rather than suffer the ignominy of falling by the executioner's hands; and, in order to encourage him to an act, to which, it seems, he was not much inclined, she set him the example in the manner Pliny relates.

In a pleasure-house belonging to the *Villa Ludovisa*, at Rome, there is a fine statue representing this action: Pætus is stabbing himself with one hand, and holds up the dying Arria with the other. Her sinking body hangs so loose, as if every joint were relaxed." *Wright's Travels*, p. 334. Martial, also, has celebrated his heroic action in a famous epigram:

Casta suo gladium cum traderet Arria Pæto,
Quem de visceribus traxerat ipsa suis;

dagger, she plunged it in her breast, and then presented it to her husband with that ever memorable, I had almost said that divine expression, "Pætus, it is not painful." It must, however, be considered, when she spoke and acted thus, she was encouraged and supported by the prospect of immortal glory. But was it not something much greater, without the aid of such animating motives, to hide her tears, to conceal her grief, and cheerfully act the mother, when she was a mother no more?

Scribonianus had taken up arms in Illyria against Claudius, where, having lost his life, Pætus, who was of his party, was brought prisoner to Rome. When they were going to put him on board a ship, Arria besought the soldiers, that she might be permitted to attend him: "Certainly," said she, "you cannot refuse a man of consular dignity, as he is, a few slaves to wait upon him; but, if you will take me, I alone will perform their office." Her request was refused; upon which she hired a small fishing-vessel, and boldly ventured to follow the ship. At her return to Rome, she met the wife of Scribonianus, in the emperor's palace, who, pressing her to discover all she knew of that insurrection, "What!" said she, "shall I regard thy advice, who sawest thy husband murdered even in thy very arms, and yet survivest

Si qua fides, vulnus quod feci non dolet, inquit,
Sed quod tu facies, hoc mihi, Pæte, dolet. L. 1. 14.

When from her breast chaste Arria snatch'd the sword,
And gave the deathful weapon to her lord,
"My wound," she said, "believe me, does not smart;
"'Tis thine alone, my Pætus, pains my heart."

him ?" An expression which evinces, that the glorious manner in which she put an end to her life, was no unpremeditated effect of sudden passion. When Thrasea, who married her daughter, was dissuading her from her purpose of destroying herself, and, among other arguments, said to her, "Would you then advise your daughter to die with me, if my life were to be taken from me ?" "Most certainly I would," she replied, "if she had lived as long, and in as much harmony with you, as I have with my Pætus." This answer greatly heightened the alarm of her family, and made them observe her for the future more narrowly; which, when she perceived, she assured them all their caution would be to no purpose. "You may oblige me," said she, "to execute my resolution in a way that will give me more pain, but it is impossible you should prevent it." She had scarce said this, when she sprang from her chair, and running her head with the utmost violence against the wall, fell down in appearance dead: but being brought to herself, "I told you," said she, "if you would not suffer me to take an easy path to death, I should make my way to it through some more difficult passage." Now, is there not, my friend, something much greater in all this, than in the so-much-talked-of "Pætus, it is not painful ?" to which, indeed, it seems to have led the way: and yet this last is the favourite topic of fame, while all the former are passed over in profound silence. Whence I cannot but infer, what I observed in the beginning of my letter, that the noblest actions are not always the most celebrated. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

TO SERVIANUS.

TO what shall I attribute your long silence? Is it want of health, or want of leisure, that prevents your writing? Or, is it, perhaps, that you have no opportunity of conveying your letters? Free me, I entreat you, from the perplexity of these doubts; for they are more, be assured, than I am able to support; and do so, even though it be at the expence of an express messenger: I will gladly bear his charges, and even reward him too, should he bring me the news I wish. As for myself, I am well, if to *be well*, can, with any propriety, be said of a man, who lives in the utmost suspense and anxiety, under the apprehension of all the accidents which can possibly befal the friend he most affectionately loves. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO SEVERUS.

I WAS obliged, by my consular office, to compliment the emperor* in the name of the republic: but after I had performed that ceremony in the senate in the usual manner, and as fully as the time and place would allow, I thought it agreeable to the affection of a good subject, to enlarge those

* Trajan.

general heads, and extend them into a complete discourse. My principal view in doing so, was to confirm the emperor in his virtues, by paying that tribute of applause to them which they so justly deserve; and, at the same time, to direct future princes, not in the formal way of lecture, but by *his* more engaging example, to those paths they must pursue, if they would attain the same heights of glory. To instruct sovereigns how to form their conduct, is a noble, but difficult task, and may, perhaps, be deemed presumption; but to applaud the character of an accomplished prince, and to hold him out to posterity as a light to guide succeeding monarchs, is a method equally useful, and much more modest. It afforded me a very singular pleasure, when I recited this panegyric in a private assembly, that my friends gave me their company, though I did not solicit them in the usual form of circular billets, but only required their attendance, if it would be agreeable to them, and they should happen to be at leisure. You know the excuses which are generally made at Rome, to avoid invitations of this kind, and prior engagements are usually alledged; yet, though the weather proved extremely bad at that time, they attended the recital for two days together: and when I thought it would be unreasonable to detain them any longer, they insisted upon my going through with it the next day. Shall I consider this as an honour done to myself, or to literature? Rather let me suppose to the latter, which, though well nigh extinct, seems to be now again reviving amongst us. Yet what was the subject which raised this uncommon at-

tention? No other than what formerly, even in the senate, where we were obliged to submit to it, we could not endure to hear, though but for a few moments. But now, you see, we have patience to recite and listen to a topic of the same nature for three days together: and the reason of the difference is, not that we have more eloquence, but more liberty than formerly, and consequently write with a more unconstrained spirit. It is an additional glory, therefore, to our present emperor, that this sort of harangues, which were once as disgusting as they were false, are now as pleasing as they are sincere. But it was not only the earnest attention of my audience which afforded me pleasure; I was greatly delighted, too, with the justness of their taste; for I observed, that the more rigid sentiments of my discourse gave them peculiar satisfaction. It is true, indeed, this work, which was written for the perusal of the world in general, was read only to a few; however, I would willingly consider their particular judgment as an earnest of that of the public, and rejoice at their manly taste, as if it were universally spread. It was in eloquence as in music, the vitiated ears of the audience introduced a depraved stile; but now I am inclined to hope, as a more correct judgment prevails in the public, our compositions of both kinds will improve too; for those authors, whose only view is to please, will form their works upon the popular taste. I trust, however, in subjects of this nature, the florid style is most proper; and am so far from thinking that the vivid colouring I have used, will be esteemed foreign and unnatural, that I am most apprehensive

censure will fall upon those parts where the diction is most simple and unornamented. Nevertheless, I sincerely wish the time may come, and that it now were, when the smooth and luscious manner, which has infected our stile, shall give place, as it ought, to severe and chaste composition.

Thus I have given you an account how I have been employed these last three days, that your absence might not entirely deprive you of a pleasure, which, from your friendship to me, and the part you take in every thing that concerns the interest of literature, I know you would have received, if you had been present. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO CALVISIUS RUFUS.

I MUST have recourse to you, as usual, in an affair which concerns my finances. An estate is offered to be sold, which lies contiguous to mine, and, indeed, is intermixed with it. There are several circumstances which strongly incline me to this purchase, as there are other no less weighty which deter me from it. The first recommendation it has, is the beauty which will result from uniting this farm to my own lands; the next, the advantage, as well as the pleasure, of being able to visit it under one trouble and expence; to have it superintended by the same steward; cultivated almost by the same husbandmen; and to have only a single mansion to support and embellish, as it will be sufficient to keep up the other just in com-

mon repair. I take into this account furniture, house-keepers, gardeners, artificers, and all the apparatus that relates to the game, as it saves a very considerable expence, when you are not obliged to keep them at more houses than one. On the other hand, I don't know whether it is prudent to venture so much of one's property exposed to the same climate, and to the same casualties; it seems a more sure method of guarding against the caprices of fortune, to distribute our possessions into different situations: besides, there is something extremely amusing in shifting the scene, and travelling from one estate to another. But to mention the point of principal difficulty:—the lands are rich, fertile, and well-watered, consisting chiefly of meadow-grounds, vineyards, and woods; the produce of which last, though it is not very great, or very profitable, yet seldom fails: but then, to balance the advantages of soil, the present tenants have been extremely oppressed. The person, who was last in possession, used frequently to seize and sell their stock, by which means, though he lessened the debt for the present, yet, in the event, he greatly impoverished the estate, and the consequence was, that the tenants were again in arrears. I shall be obliged, therefore, to furnish these honest farmers with a new supply of hands for tillage, which I must be at the expence of buying, as there are none left upon the estate, neither have I any bond-slaves* of my own.—And now it remains only to inform you

* The Romans used to employ their criminals in the lower offices of husbandry, such as ploughing, &c. Plin. H. N. l. 18. 3.

of the price, which is three millions of sesterces.* It has been formerly sold for five millions ;† but, partly by the general calamity of the times, and partly by its being thus stripped of labourers, the income of this estate is reduced, and consequently its value. You will be inclined, perhaps, to enquire, whether I can easily raise the purchase-money ? It is true, my estate is chiefly in land, though I have also some money placed out at interest ; but I can, without difficulty, borrow any sum I may want. I have always a sure resource in the purse of my wife's mother, which I can use with the same freedom as my own ; so that you need not give yourself any trouble as to that article, if you should have no other objections, which I beg you would very accurately consider ; for, as in every thing else, so particularly in matters of œconomy, no man has more judgment and experience than yourself. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO MAXIMUS.

YOU remember, no doubt, to have read what commotions were occasioned by the law, which ordains that the elections of magistrates‡ shall be

* About L. 24,000 of our money.

† About L. 40,000 of our money.

‡ The author of this law was one Gabinius, a tribune of the people, A. U. 614. It gave a very considerable blow to the influence of the nobility, as in this way of balloting it could not be discovered

by balloting, and how much the author of it was both approved and condemned. Yet this very law the senate lately unanimously revived; and, upon the election day, with one consent, called for the ballots. It must be owned, the method by open votes had introduced into the senate more riot and disorder than is seen even in the assemblies of the people; all regularity in speaking, all decency of silence, all dignity of character, was disregarded; it was universal dissonance and clamour: here, the several candidates running from side to side with their patrons; there, a troop collected together in the middle of the senate, and, in short, the whole assembly dividing into separate parties, created the most indecent confusion. Thus widely had we departed from the manners of our ancestors, who conducted these elections with a calmness and regularity suitable to the reverence which is due to the majesty of the place. I have been informed, by some who remembered those times, that the method observed in their assemblies was this: the name of the person who offered himself for any office being called over, a profound silence ensued, when immediately the candidate appeared; who, after he had spoken for himself, and given an account to the senate of his manner of life, called witnesses in support of his character. These were either the person under whom he had served in the army, or to whom he had been quæstor, or both,

on which side the people gave their votes, and consequently took off that restraint they before lay under, by the fear of offending their superiors.

(if the case admitted of it) to whom he also joined some of those friends who espoused his interest. They delivered what they had to say in his favour in a few words, but with great dignity; and this had far more influence than the modern method of humble solicitation. Sometimes the candidate would object either to the birth, or age, or character of his competitor; to which the senate would listen with a severe and impartial attention: and thus was merit generally preferred to interest. But corruption having abused this wise institution of our ancestors, we were obliged to have recourse to the way of balloting, as the most probable remedy for the evil. The method being new, and immediately put in practice, it answered the present purpose very well; but, I am afraid, in process of time, it will introduce new inconveniences; as this manner of balloting seems to afford a sort of screen to injustice and partiality. For, how few are there, who preserve the same delicacy of conduct in secret, as when exposed to the view of the world? The truth is, the generality of mankind revere fame more than conscience. But this, perhaps, may be pronouncing too hastily upon a future event: be it therefore as it hereafter may, we have, in the mean while, obtained, by this method, an election of such magistrates as best deserved the honour. For, it was with us, as with that sort of judges who are named upon the spot; we were taken before we had time to be biassed, and, therefore, we determined impartially.

I have given you this detail, not only as a piece of news, but because I am glad to seize every op-

portunity of speaking of affairs concerning the republic; a subject which, as we have fewer occasions of mentioning than our ancestors, so we ought to be more careful not to let any of them slip. In good earnest, I am tired with repeating over and over the same compliments, "How d'ye do?" and "I hope you are well?" Why should our letters for ever turn upon trivial and domestic concerns? It is true, indeed, the direction of the public weal is in the hands of a single person, who, for the general good, takes upon himself to ease us of the whole care and weight of government; but still that bountiful source of power permits, by a very generous dispensation, some streams to flow down to us; and of these we may not only partake ourselves, but thus, as it were, administer them to our absent friends. Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO PRISCUS.

I HAVE just received an account of the death of poor Martial, which much concerns me. He was a man of an acute and lively genius, and his writings abound with much satirical wit, conducted, at the same time, by equal candour. When he left Rome, I made him a present to defray the charges of his journey; and I gave it to him, not only as a testimony of my friendship, but in return for the verses with which he had complimented me. It was the custom of the ancients to distinguish those poets with honourable and pecuniary rewards, who

had celebrated particular persons or cities in their verses, but this good custom, with every other that is generous and noble, is now grown out of fashion; and, in consequence of having ceased to act laudably, we consider praise as an impertinent and worthless tribute. You will be desirous, perhaps, to see the verses which merited this acknowledgment from me; and I believe I can, from my memory, partly satisfy your curiosity, without referring you to his works: but if you should be pleased with this specimen, you must turn to his poems for the rest. He addresses himself to his Muse, whom he directs to go to my house upon the *Esquiliæ*;* but to approach it with respect:

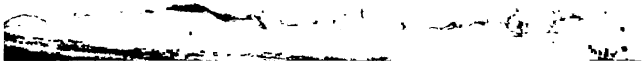
> Go, wanton Muse, but go with care,
> Nor meet, ill-timed, my Pliny's ear:
> He, by sage Minerva taught,
> Gives the day to studious thought,
> And plans that eloquence divine,
> Which shall to future ages shine,
> And rival, wond'rous Tully! thine.
> Then, cautious, watch the festive hour,
> When Bacchus reigns in all his power;
> When, crowned with fragrant chaplets gay,
> Catos might read my frolic lay.†

Do you not think that the poet, who addressed these lines to me, deserved some friendly marks of my bounty *then*, and of my sorrow *now*? For he gave me the best he had to bestow, and it was want of power only that his present was not more valuable. But, indeed, what can be conferred more

* One of the seven famous hills upon which Rome was situated.

† Mart. l. x. 19.

valuable than the honour of never-fading praise? And though it should be granted, that his poems will not long survive their author, still, no doubt, he flattered himself they would prove immortal. Farewell.



THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK FOURTH.

LETTER I.

TO FABATUS.

YOU have long desired a visit from your grand-daughter,* accompanied by me. Nothing, be assured, could be more agreeable to us both; for we equally wish to see you, and are determined to delay that pleasure no longer. For this purpose our baggage is actually making ready, and we are hastening to you with all the expedition the roads will permit. We shall stop only once, and that for a short time; intending to turn a little out of the way, in order to go into Tuscany: not for the sake of looking upon our estate, and into our family concerns, for that we could defer to another opportunity, but to perform an indispensable duty. There is a town near my estate, called Tifernum-upon-the-Tiber,† which put itself under my patronage when I was yet a youth. These people enter warmly into my interest, celebrate my arrival

* Calphurnia, Pliny's wife.

† Now Citta di Castello.

among them with public rejoicings; express the greatest concern when I leave them; and, in short, give every proof of an affection towards me as strong as it is undeserved. That I may return their good offices (for what generous mind can bear to be excelled in acts of friendship?) I have erected a temple in this place, at my own expence; and, as it is finished, it would be a sort of impiety to delay the dedication of it any longer. We design, therefore, to be present on the day that ceremony is to be performed; and I have resolved to celebrate it with a general feast. We may possibly continue there all the next day, but we shall make so much the more expedition in our journey afterwards. May we have the happiness to find you and your daughter in good health! in good spirits, I am sure we shall, if you should see us safely arrived. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO CLEMENS.

REGULUS has lost his son; and I should call it a misfortune he well deserves, but that I am persuaded he does not think it one. The boy was of a sprightly, but ambiguous turn; however, he seemed capable of going right, if he should escape the infection of his father's example. Regulus gave him his freedom,* in order to entitle him to the

* The Romans had an absolute power over their children, of which no age or station of the latter deprived them. See B. VIII. Let. 18. note.

estate left him by his mother; and when he got into possession of it, endeavoured (as the character of the man made it generally reported) to wheedle him out of it, by the most singular and disgraceful indulgences. This, perhaps, you will scarce think credible; but if you consider Regulus, you will not be long of that opinion. However, he now expresses his concern for the loss of this youth in a most extravagant manner. The boy had a great number of little horses for the different kinds of vehicles; dogs of various sorts, together with parrots, black-birds, and nightingales* in abundance: these Regulus slew† round the funeral pile

* This bird was much esteemed amongst nice eaters, and was sold at a high price. Horace mentions, as an instance of great extravagance, two brothers, who used to dine upon them.

Quinti progenies Arri, par nobile fratrum——
Luscinias soliti impenso prandere coëmtas. L. 2. Sat. 3,

A noble pair of brothers——
On nightingales of monstrous purchase dined. *Mr. Francis.*

† From an unaccountable notion that prevailed among the ancients, that the ghosts delighted in blood, it was customary to kill a great number of beasts, and throw them on the funeral pile. In the more ignorant and barbarous ages, men were the unhappy victims of this horrid rite. Even the compassionate Æneas is represented by Virgil as practising this cruel ceremony, at the funeral honours which he performed to the memory of the unfortunate Pallas:

——*Sulmone creatos*
Quatuor hic juvenes, totidem quos educat Ufens,
Viventes rapit; inferias quos immolat umbris,
Captivoque rogi perfundat sanguine flammas. Æn. 10. 517.

Four youths by Sulmo, four by Ufens bred,
Unhappy victims! destined to the dead,
He seized alive, to offer on the pyre,
And sprinkle, with their blood, the funeral fire. *Mr. Pitt.*

of his son, in all the ostentation of affected grief. He is visited upon this occasion by a surprising number of people, who, though they secretly detest and abhor the man, yet are as assiduous in attentions, as if they were actuated by a principle of real esteem and affection; in short, they endeavour to recommend themselves to his favour, by following his own hypocritical example. He is retired to his villa across the Tiber, where he has covered a vast extent of ground with his porticoes, and crowded all the shore with his statues; for he unites prodigality with avarice, and vain-glory with infamy. By his continuing at this distance from the city, he endangers the health of those visitors, who go to pay him their compliments of condolence at this unwholesome season; and he seems to consider the hazard to which they are exposed, as an additional circumstance of consolation. He gives out, with his usual absurdity, that he designs to marry. You must expect, therefore, to hear shortly of the wedding of a man, oppressed with sorrow and with years; that is, of one who marries both too soon and too late. Do you ask my reason for thinking so? Certainly, not because he affirms it himself, (for never was there so infamous a liar,) but because there is no doubt that Regulus will do every thing he ought not. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO ANTONINUS.

THAT you have twice enjoyed the dignity of consul, with a conduct equal to that of our most

illustrious ancestors; that few (your modesty will not suffer me to say none) ever have, or ever will, come up to the integrity and wisdom of your Asiatic administration; that in virtue, in authority, and even in years, you are the first of Romans; these, most certainly, are shining and noble parts of your character; nevertheless, I own, it is in your retired hours that I most admire you. To season the severity of business with the sprightliness of wit, and to temper wisdom with politeness, is as difficult as it is great; yet, these uncommon qualities you have most happily united in those wonderful charms which grace both your conversation and your writings. Your lips, like the venerable old man's in Homer,* drop honey; and one would imagine the bee had diffused her sweetness over all you compose. These were the sentiments impressed upon me, when I lately read your Greek epigrams and satires. What elegance, what beauties, shine in this collection! How sweetly the numbers flow, and how exactly are they wrought up in the true spirit of the ancients! What a vein of wit runs through every line, and how conformable is the whole to the rules of just criticism! I fancied I had in my hands Callimachus or Herodes, or, if possible, some poet even superior to

* ——————Νεστορ
Ηδυεπης αγορηστα. λιγυς Πυλιων αγορητης,
Του ὑ απο γλωσσης μελιτος γλυκιων ρεεν αὐδη.
Il. i. 247.

Experienced Nestor, in persuasion skilled,
Words sweet as honey from his lips distilled.
POPE.

these: though, indeed, neither of those authors excelled, as you have, in both those species of poetry. Is it possible, that a Roman can write Greek in so much perfection? I protest I do not believe Athens herself can be more attic. In short, I cannot but envy Greece the honour of your preference: and since you can write thus eloquently in a foreign language, it does not rest upon conjecture what you could have performed in your own. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO SOSSIUS.

I HAVE a very singular value for Calvisius Nepos; as, indeed, he is a man of indefatigable industry, great eloquence, and (what I prefer to all the rest) of consummate integrity: he is nephew to your friend and my guest Calvisius. I beg, therefore, you would do him and his uncle the honour of making him one of the half-yearly tribunes of the army.* It will be an obligation to both of us, as well as to Nepos, whom, I am persuaded, you will think equally deserving your favour. You have bestowed numberless good offices upon many; but, I will venture to say, you never conferred one that was better placed than in the present instance, and few, perhaps, so well. Farewell.

* Their business was to decide all controversies in the army, to take care of the works and camp, &c. Their command lasted but six months. KENNET's *Rom. Antiq.*

LETTER V.

TO SPARSUS.

IT is said, when Æschines,* at the request of the Rhodians, read to them one of his orations, and then that which Demosthenes delivered upon the same occasion, they were both received with the loudest applause. I am not surprised that the harangues of such excellent orators should be thus warmly admired, when I consider, that even a speech of mine, which I lately recited before a very judicious audience, was heard with equal earnestness and approbation, during two days successively; yet there was not the pleasure which arises from a contention between two rival pieces, to awaken their attention. The Rhodians, besides the particular merit of the respective orations, had their curiosity excited by comparing them together: but mine, though destitute of that recommendation, had the good fortune to please: whether deservedly or not, you will judge when you read the performance; the extent of which will not permit me to introduce it to you with a longer preface. I must therefore shorten my letter, in order to reconcile you the better to the length of the speech that attends it; which, however, I have not enlarged beyond the bounds my subject required. Farewell.

* See Book II. Let. 3.

LETTER VI.

TO NASO.

A STORM of hail, I am informed, has destroyed all the produce of my estate in Tuscany; while that which I have on the other side the Po, though it has proved extremely fruitful this season, yet, from the excesive cheapness of every thing, turns to small account. Laurentinum is the single possession which yields me any advantage. I have nothing there, indeed, but a house and gardens; all the rest is barren sands; still, however, my best productions rise at Laurentinum. It is there I cultivate, if not my lands, at least my mind, and employ much of my time in writing. As, in other parts of my estate, I can show you full barns; so here I can entertain you with good store of the literary kind. Let me advise you then, if you wish for a fertile and never-failing possession, to purchase some spot upon this studious and contemplative coast. Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO LEPIDUS.

I HAVE often told you, that Regulus is a man of spirit: whatever he engages in, he is sure to execute in a most extraordinary manner. He chose lately to be extremely concerned for the loss of his son: accordingly he mourned for him in a

way which no man ever mourned before. He took it into his head, that he would have several statues and representations of his person; immediately all the artizans in Rome are set to work. Paint, wax, brass, silver, ivory, marble, all exhibit the figure of young Regulus. Not long ago he read, before a numerous audience, a long panegyric upon the life of his son: a large volume upon the life of a boy! Then a thousand transcribers were employed to copy this curious narrative, which he dispersed all over the empire. He wrote, likewise, a sort of circular letter to the several Decurii,* to desire they would select one of their order, who had a strong clear voice, to read this eulogy to the people; and I am informed it has been read accordingly. Had this spirit (or whatever else you will call vehemence in executing all one undertakes) been rightly applied, what infinite good might it have produced! The misfortune is, this warmth of temper is generally strongest in men of vicious characters; for, as ignorance begets rashness, and knowledge inspires deliberation, so modesty is apt to check the exertions of genius, whilst confidence animates and excites the activity of little minds. Regulus is a signal proof of the truth of this observation: he has a weak voice, an awkward address, an indistinct utterance, a slow imagination, and no memory; in a word, he is nothing but a composition of absurdity; and yet, by the assistance of a flighty turn, and much impudence, he passes with many for a finished orator. Herennius Senecio re-

* See Book I. Let. 8. in note.

versed Cato's* definition of an orator, and applied it, with great justness, to Regulus: "An orator," said he, "is a bad man, unskilled in the art of speaking." And, in fact, Cato's definition is not

* Cato, as we learn from Nonius, composed a treatise upon rhetoric, for the use of his son, wherein he defined an orator to be, "a good man skilled in the art of speaking." The judicious Quinctilian has embraced this notion, and employs a whole chapter to prove, that, "none but a good man can be an orator;" for want of virtue is, in this excellent critic's estimation, want of genius: noble sentiments, and unworthy actions, can never, he maintains, reside in the same bosom: "*in eodem pectore nullum est honestum turpiumque consortium.*" Inst. Orat. lib. xii. c. 1.—Longinus establishes the same principle; as it, indeed, prevails in general, throughout the ancients, which they extend not only to oratory, but poetry, and all the fine arts. A modern author (whom future ages will mention with the best of the ancients) has adopted this opinion, and illustrated it in several parts of his writings: "Knavery," says that noble writer, "is mere dissonance and disproportion; and though villains may have strong tones, and natural capacities of action, it is impossible that true *judgment* and *ingenuity* should reside where harmony and *honesty* have no being.—Thus the sense of inward numbers, the knowledge and *practice* of social virtues, and the familiarity and favour of the moral graces, are essential to the character of a deserving artist, and just favourite of the Muses. Thus are the *arts* and *virtues* mutually friends; and the science of *Virtuosos*, and that of *virtue* itself, become, in a manner, one and the same." *Characteristics*, Vol. 1. pp. 208. 330. Virtue, no doubt, is the highest good sense, and all deviations from moral rectitude are so many false reasonings; still, it must be owned and regretted, that great parts have two often been found united with great deficiences of the moral kind, to make the reality of that character either improbable or uncommon. Experience will force us to give credit to history in this case, rather than to philosophy; and oblige us to acknowledge, there is nothing inconsistent in what the elegant Paterculus says of Curio, whom he represents as *ingeniosissime nequam et facundus malo publico*: "most ingeniously wicked, and eloquent to the destruction of his country." PATERC. *Hist.* 1. 2. 48.

a more exact description of a true orator, than Senecio's is of the character of this man. Would you make a suitable return to this letter? let me know if you, or any of my friends in your town, have, with an air of pleasantry, *mouthed* (as Demosthenes calls it) this melancholy piece to the people, like a stroller in the market-place. For so absurd a performance must move rather laughter than compassion; and, indeed, the composition is as puerile as the subject. Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO ARRIANUS.

MY advancement to the dignity of augur,* is an honour that justly, indeed, merits your congratulations; not only as it is highly glorious to receive, even in the slightest instances, a testimony of the approbation of so wise and judicious a prince;† but as it is also an ancient and sacred institution, which has this high and peculiar privilege annexed to it, that it is for life.‡ Other sacerdotal offices, though they may, perhaps, be equal to this in dignity, yet, as they are given, so they may be taken away; but fortune has no farther

* Their business was to interpret dreams, oracles, prodigies, &c. and to foretell whether any action should be fortunate or prejudicial, to particular persons, or to the whole commonwealth. Upon this account, they very often occasioned the displacing of magistrates, the deferring of public assemblies, &c. KENNET'S *Rom. Antiq. p.* 67.

† Trajan.

‡ See Book II. Let. 1. in note.

power over *this*, than to bestow it. What recommends this dignity to me still more is, that I have the honour to succeed so illustrious a person as Julius Frontinus. He, for many years, upon the nomination day of proper persons to be received into the sacred college, constantly proposed me, as if he had a view to my being his successor; and since it has actually proved so in the event, I am willing to look upon it as something more than accident. But the circumstance, it seems, that most pleases you in this preferment, is, that Tully enjoyed the same post; and you rejoice (you tell me,) to find, that I follow his steps as closely in the path of honours, as I endeavour to do in that of eloquence. I wish, indeed, as I had the advantage to be elected earlier into the sacred college and consular office than Cicero, so I might, in my more advanced years, catch some spark, at least, of his divine genius! The former, as it is in the disposal of man, may be conferred on me, and on many others; but the latter is an attainment much too arduous for my powers, and is the gift alone of heaven. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO URSUS.

WE have been engaged, for several days past, in the cause of Julius Bassus; a man grown familiar with misfortunes, and rendered conspicuous by a series of calamities. In the reign of Vespasian, two private persons informed against him: and the affair being referred to the senate, it depended there

a considerable time; when, at last, he was honourably acquitted. During the time of Titus, he was under continual apprehensions of his displeasure, as being known to favour the interests of Domitian; yet, when the latter ascended the throne, Bassus was exiled, but afterwards recalled by Nerva. Having obtained the proconsulship of Bithynia, he was, at his return from thence, accused of bribery and extortion; and as he was prosecuted with great warmth, he was defended with equal spirit. The sentiments of the senate were much divided; however, the majority were on the most favourable side. Pomponius Rufus, a man of acute parts, and vehement in his manner of elocution, was counsel against him. He was seconded by Theophanes, one of the deputies from the province, and, indeed, the origin and instigator of this prosecution. I began the reply; for Bassus insisted, that the foundation of his defence should be laid by me. He desired me to represent the just consideration that was due to his illustrious birth, to his own rank, and to the persecution he had formerly suffered; that his accusers were informers by profession, who reaped considerable advantage by their trade;* and to display the true reasons which rendered him odious to the seditious, and particularly to Theophanes; but, above all, to confute the principal charge that was brought against him: for, in respect to all the other heinous articles of the accusation, he not only deserved to be acquitted, but highly commended. The circum-

* Informers had a fourth part of the effects of the persons convicted.

stance which pressed with the greatest weight in the case was, that, in the simplicity of his heart, he had incautiously received the gifts, which some of his friends in the province (for he had been among them before, as quæstor) thought proper to send him. This, which his accusers called rapine and extortion, Bassus justified under the name of *presents*. But then the laws expressly forbid persons in his station, to receive any presents whatsoever.—Now, what mode of defence should I adopt upon this occasion? If I denied the fact, I was afraid it would look like a tacit confession, that, supposing it true, it was actually extortion; besides, to disown what was so notorious, would be to strengthen, rather than to extenuate, the charge. And, indeed, he had put the denial out of the power of his counsel, if they had thought it proper; for he had acknowledged to several persons, and particularly to the emperor, that he had received, and returned, a few slight presents, both upon his birth-day, and at the feast of the Saturnalia.* Should I apply to the clemency of the senate? That would be ruining my client at once; by confessing, the nature of his offence was such, that there was no other way of saving him. Should I then justify the fact? But, in so doing, should have injured my own character, without rendering any service to Bassus. Under these difficulties, I thought it would be best to steer a middle course; and, I flatter myself, I happily hit upon it. But night coming on, separated,

* Celebrated in honour of Saturn; at which time it was customary for friends to send presents to one another.

as usual, the combatants. I had spoken for three hours and a half, so that I had still an hour and a half remaining. For the law having allowed six hours to the plaintiff, and nine to the defendant, Bassus had so divided this portion of time between me and the advocate who was to speak after me, that I had five hours, and the latter the rest. But perceiving my speech had made a favourable impression upon the senate, I thought it would be most advisable to add nothing more; for it is not prudent, you know, to push one's success too far. Besides, I was apprehensive I should not have strength to renew the defence the next day; as it is much easier to go on without interruption, than to resume after a long intermission. There was yet another consideration which had great weight with me: I was afraid, that, as the discontinuance of my speech would abate my own ardour, so the resumption of it might prove tiresome to my hearers. When an harangue is carried on in one continued flow, the speaker best keeps up his own ardour, and the attention of the audience; both which are apt to cool and become languid by intermission; just as a continued motion preserves the light of a torch, which, when once it is extinct, is not easily re-lumed. But Bassus, almost with tears in his eyes, earnestly entreated me to proceed with his defence for the remainder of the time; and I accordingly complied, preferring his interest to my own. The event proved agreeable to our wishes; for I found the attention of the senate as fresh and lively as if it had been rather animated than fatigued by my preceding speech. I was seconded by Luceius Albinus, who

entered so thoroughly into the principles of my reasoning, that our arguments, whilst they had the variety of different and distinct pleadings, had the connection and uniformity of one continued harangue. Herennius Pollio replied to us with great spirit and power: and, after him, Theophanes spoke again; in this, as in every thing else, discovering his uncommon assurance, by presuming to take up the time of the senate after two such eloquent persons, and of consular dignity,* had immediately preceded him. He continued haranguing till evening, and even beyond it; for lights were brought in. The next day, Titius Homulus, and Fronto, spoke admirably in defence of Bassus. The fourth day was employed in examining the proofs. Bæbius Macer, the consul elect, declared Bassus guilty, within the express words of the law, relating to bribery and extortion. Cæpio Hispo was of opinion, that, without affecting his dignity, the case should be referred to the ordinary judges: and both their sentiments were founded in reason. You will wonder how that can possibly be true, since they were so extremely different; but you will observe, that Macer, who considered the mere letter of the law, might very reasonably condemn him, when it appeared he had taken presents contrary to its express prohibition. On the other hand, Cæpio, supposing that the senate had a power (as

* The two persons here meant are Herennius Pollio, and Pomponius Rufus, mentioned above, who pleaded against Bassus, on the same side with Theophanes. Some critics, indeed, suppose Pliny includes himself; but the contrary seems plain from the context. See *Masson. vit. Plin.* 119.

undoubtedly it has) to mitigate or to urge the rigour of the laws, might, upon very good grounds, think this a case worthy of their clemency, as being (though, indeed, contrary to the express letter of the law, yet) not unfrequently practised. The motion of Cæpio prevailed; and, when he rose up to give the reasons for his vote, the same acclamations attended him as usually follow an approved decision. You will easily judge, therefore, how great the applause was after he had delivered his opinion, when he received such a singular mark of approbation before he had uttered a word. I find the sentiments of those without doors, as well as in the senate, are divided: They who approve of Cæpio's vote, condemn Macer's as severe and hard; on the contrary, the partizans of Macer's opinion treat the other as too mild, and, indeed, inconsistent. They assert, that it is highly absurd to send a man to be tried before the ordinary judges, and yet suffer him to retain his seat in the senate. I should have told you, that there was, besides those sentiments I have mentioned, a third opinion. Valerius Paulinus, who joined with Cæpio, was for adding, that the senate should proceed against Theophanes, after he should have discharged his commission, as deputy from the province: For he insisted, that Theophanes had been guilty of several of those misdemeanors which fell within the prohibition of this very law, and upon which he grounded his information against Bassus. But although this proposal was, in general, highly approved by the senate, yet the consuls thought proper to drop it: Paulinus, however, had the full credit of so hon-

est and bold a motion. At the breaking up of the senate, Bassus was received by great crowds of people with the highest demonstrations of joy, and the loudest acclamations. This new difficulty which he had fallen into, had recalled the remembrance of his former troubles; and a name, which had never been mentioned but in conjunction with some misfortune, together with the appearance of a fine person broken with sorrow and age, had raised a general compassion towards him. You may look upon this letter as the forerunner of my speech, which, long and copious as it is, I shall send you at large: But you must not expect it soon; for it is a subject of too much importance to be revised in haste. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO SABINUS.

YOUR letter informs me, that Sabina, who appointed you and me her heirs, though she has no where expressly directed that Modestus shall have his freedom, yet has left him a legacy in the following words: "*I give, &c.—to Modestus, whom I have ordered to have his freedom:*" upon which you desire my sentiments. I have consulted the most learned lawyers, and they all agree Modestus is not entitled to his liberty, since it is not *expressly* given; and, consequently, that the legacy is void, as being devised to a slave.* But it appears plainly to be

* A slave was incapable of property; and, therefore, whatever he acquired became the right of his master.

a mistake in the testatrix; and, therefore, I think we ought to act, in this case, as if Sabina had directed, in so many words, what, it is clear, she imagined she had ordered. I am persuaded you will join with me in this opinion, who so religiously regard the will of the dead; which, indeed, where it can be discovered, will always be law to an honest mind. Honour is to you and me as strong an obligation, as the compulsion of law is to others. Let Modestus, then, enjoy his freedom and his legacy, in as full a manner, as if Sabina had observed all the requisite forms; as, indeed, they effectually do, who make a judicious choice of the persons whom they appoint their heirs. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO MINUTIANUS.

YOU have scarcely, I imagine, yet heard (for the news is but just arrived) that Licinianus is become a professor in Sicily. This unfortunate person, who lately enjoyed the dignity of prætor, and was esteemed the most eloquent of our advocates, is now fallen from a senator to an exile, from an orator to a teacher of rhetoric. Licinianus himself took notice of this sad change, in a pathetic speech which he made at the opening of his school: "Oh fortune," said he, "how capriciously dost thou sport with mankind! Thou makest rhetoricians of senators, and senators of rhetoricians!" a sarcasm so poignant and full of gall,* that one

* See Book III. Let. 9. p. 164, note.

might almost imagine he fixed upon this profession merely for the sake of an opportunity of applying it. Being dressed, when he first appeared in the chair, after the Grecian fashion, (for exiles are not permitted to wear the Roman gown,) "Alas," says he, looking upon his garment, "I am going to declaim in Latin!" You will think, perhaps, this situation, wretched and deplorable as it is, is what he well deserves, for having stained the honourable profession of an orator by his abominable lewdness. It is true, indeed, he confessed the crime with which he was charged; but whether it was from a consciousness of his guilt, or from an apprehension of worse consequences if he denied it, is not clear; for Domitian's vengeance generally raged with the greatest fury, where his evidence failed him most. That emperor had determined, that Cornelia Maximilla, one of the vestal virgins,* should be buried alive; from an extrava-

* "Their office was to attend upon the rites of Vesta, the chief part of which was the preservation of the holy fire. If this fire happened to go out, it was thought impiety to light it at any common flame, but they made use of the pure and unpolluted rays of the sun for that purpose. There were other holy things under their care, of which we have very uncertain accounts. The chief rules prescribed them were, to vow the strictest chastity for the space of 30 years. After this term was completed, they had liberty to leave the order. If they broke their vow of virginity, they were buried alive in a place allotted to that peculiar use."—*Kennet's Antiq.* Their character for sanctity was so great, that Livy mentions two of those virgins having violated their vows, as a prodigy that threatened destruction to the Roman state. Lib. xxii. c. 57. And Suetonius informs us, that Augustus had so high an opinion of this religious order, that he consigned the care of his will to six of these vestals.—*Suet. in. vit. Aug.*

gant notion, that this sort of exemplary severities did honour to his reign. Accordingly, in the character of high-priest, or rather, indeed, in that of a lawless and cruel tyrant, he convened the sacred college, not in the pontifical court, where they usually assemble, but at his villa near Alba; and there (by a sentence no less wicked, as it was passed when she was not present to defend herself, than as it was the effect of passion and revenge,) he condemned her of having violated her vestal vow. Yet he himself had been guilty, not only of debauching his brother's daughter, but was also accessary to her death: for that lady, being a widow, in order to conceal her shame, endeavoured to procure an abortion, and, by that means, lost her life. However, the priests were directed to see the sentence immediately executed upon Cornelia. As they were leading her to the place of execution, she implored Vesta, and the rest of the gods, to attest her virtue; and, among other exclamations, frequently cried out, "Is it possible that Cæsar can think me polluted, under the influence of whose sacred functions he has conquered and triumphed?" Whether she said this in flattery or derision; whether it proceeded from a consciousness of her innocence, or contempt of the emperor, is not certain;* but she continued exclaiming in this manner, till she came to the place of execution, to which she was conducted at least like a criminal, though, perhaps, blameless. As she was descending into the subterraneous cavern, her robe hitched

* It was usual with Domitian to triumph, not only without a victory, but even after a defeat.

upon something in the way, and turning back to disengage it, the executioner offered her his hand, which she refused with some horror, as if she could not touch it without impurity. Thus she preserved the appearance of untainted chastity to the concluding scene of her life,

"And her last care was decently to fall."*

Celer, likewise, a Roman knight, who was accused of having had an intrigue with her, during the whole time his sentence† was executing in the square near the senate-house, persisted in saying, "What crime have I committed? I have committed none." These declarations of innocency had exceedingly exasperated Domitian, as imputing to him acts of cruelty and injustice. Accordingly, Licinianus being seized by the emperor's orders for having carried off a freed-woman of Cornelia's, and concealed her at one of his estates, was advised, by the persons who had him in custody, to confess the fact, if he hoped to obtain a remission of his punishment; and he complied with their advice. Herennius Senecio spoke for him in his absence, somewhat in that abrupt manner which Antilochus in Homer‡ relates the death of Patroclus: "Dead is

* Euripides, in his tragedy of Hecuba.

† The punishment inflicted upon the violators of vestal chastity, was, to be scourged to death.

‡ ——————Antilochus appears,
And tells the melancholy tale with tears;
Sad tidings, son of Peleus, thou must hear,
And wretched I, th' unwilling messenger!—
Dead is Patroclus!

POPE, *Iliad*, Lib. XVIII. v. 20.

Patroclus !" "Instead of an advocate," said he, "I must turn informer : Licinianus is fled !" This news was so agreeable to Domitian, that he could not forbear betraying his satisfaction : "Then," says he, "has Licinianus acquitted us of injustice ; and we will not urge his punishment to the utmost." He accordingly permitted him to carry off such of his effects as he could secure before they were seized for the use of the public ; and, in other respects, softened the sentence of his banishment, as a sort of reward for this voluntary confession. Licinianus was afterwards, by the clemency of the Emperor Nerva, permitted to fix in Sicily, where he now professes rhetoric, and inveighs against the caprices of fortune.

You see how obedient I am to your commands, by sending you a circumstantial detail of foreign as well as domestic news. I imagined, indeed, as you were absent when this transaction happened, you had heard only, in general, that Licinianus was banished upon account of his lewd crimes. For fame usually makes her report in general terms, without relating particular circumstances. I think I deserve, in return, a full account of all that happens in your town, and neighbourhood ; for sometimes, no doubt, occurrences arise there worth relating : at all events, however, write any thing you please, provided you send me a letter as long as mine. But I give you notice, I will abate nothing in this demand, and I shall not only number the sides, but even the very lines and syllables. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO ARRIANUS.

I KNOW you love Marcellinus, and, indeed, you have frequently mentioned him to me with particular approbation; but he will rise still higher in your esteem, when I inform you of the honourable part he has lately acted. When he went quæstor into one of the provinces, the person to whose lot it fell to attend him as secretary, happening to die before his salary became due, Marcellinus had too much honour to think he had a right of applying the sum, which the public had appointed for that purpose, to his own use. At his return, therefore, he applied to Cæsar; who referred the consideration of what should be done with this money to the senate. It was a question, indeed, of no great importance; however, a question it was. The heirs of the secretary claimed it for themselves; and the commissioners of the treasury for the public. The cause was tried, and counsel on behalf of each party were heard, who spoke extremely well for their respective clients. Cæcilius Strabo was of opinion, that the public had a right to this money; Bæbius Macer thought it legally belonged to the heirs: but it was determined agreeably to the sentiments of the former. You will, I am persuaded, take the first opportunity, as I did, of expressing your approbation to Marcellinus of this conduct; for though, indeed, it is abundantly sufficient, that he has received the applause of the

emperor and the senate, yet the addition of yours will be a very considerable satisfaction to him. Those who are actuated by a sense of fame, are fond of praise, even though it comes from their inferiors; but Marcellinus has so high a respect for you, as to be particularly desirous of approving himself to your judgment. To which let me add, it will increase his satisfaction when he finds, that the fame of this action has travelled so far as to have reached your parts. For I know not how it is, mankind are generally more pleased with an extensive than even a great reputation. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO CORNELIUS TACITUS.

I REJOICE that you are safely arrived in Rome; for though I am always desirous to see you, I am more particularly so now. I purpose to continue a few days longer at my house at Tusculum, in order to finish a work which I have upon my hands; for I am afraid, should I put a stop to this design, now that it is so nearly completed, I shall find it difficult to resume it. In the mean while, that I may lose no time, I send this letter before me to request a favour of you, which I hope shortly to ask in person. But before I inform you what my request is, I must let you into the occasion of it. Being lately at Comum, the place of my nativity, a young lad, son to one of my neighbours, made me a visit. I asked him whether he studied rhetoric, and where? he told me he did, and at Me-

diolanum.* And why not here? "Because," said his father, who came with him, "we have no professors."—"No!" said I; "surely it nearly concerns you, who are fathers," and very opportunely several of the company were, "that your sons should receive their education here, rather than any where else. For, where can they be placed more agreeably than in their own country, or instructed with more safety and less expence than at home, and under the eye of their parents? Upon what very easy terms might you, by a general contribution, procure proper masters, if you would only apply towards the raising a salary for them, the extraordinary expence you sustain for your son's journies, lodgings, and for whatever else you pay in consequence of their being educated at a distance from home; as pay you must, for every article of every kind. Though I have no children myself, yet I shall willingly contribute to a design so beneficial to my native country, which I consider as my child or my parent; and, therefore, I will advance a third part of any sum you should think proper to raise for this purpose. I would take upon myself the whole expence, were I not apprehensive that my benefaction might, hereafter, be abused and perverted to private ends; which I have observed to be the case in several places where public foundations of this nature have been established. The single mean to prevent this mischief is, to leave the choice of the professors entirely in the breast of the parents; who will be so much the more care-

* Milan.

ful whom they elect, as they will be obliged to share the expence of their stipend. For though they may be negligent in disposing of another's bounty, they will certainly be cautious how they apply their own; and will see, that none but those who deserve it shall receive my money, when they must, at the same time, receive theirs too. Let my example then encourage you to unite heartily in this useful design; and be assured, the greater the sum my proportion shall amount to, the more agreeable it will be to me. You can undertake nothing that will be more advantageous to your children, nor more acceptable to your country. Your sons will, by these means, receive their education where they received their birth, and be accustomed, from their infancy, to inhabit and affect their native soil. May you be able to procure professors of such distinguished abilities, that the neighbouring towns shall be glad to draw their learning from hence; and, as you now send your children to foreigners for education, may foreigners, in their turn, flock hither for their instruction!"

I thought proper thus to lay open to you the principles upon which this scheme turns, that you might be the more sensible how agreeable it will be to me, if you undertake the office I request. I entreat you, therefore, with all the earnestness a matter of so much importance deserves, to look out, amongst the great numbers of men of letters, whom the reputation of your genius brings to you, proper persons to whom we may apply for this purpose; but without entering into any agreement with them on my part. For I would leave it en-

tirely free to the parents to judge and choose as they shall see proper: all the share I pretend to claim is, that of contributing my assistance and my money. If, therefore, any one shall be found, who thinks himself qualified for the office, he may repair thither: but without relying upon any thing but his merit. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO PATERNUS.

YOU expect, perhaps, as usual, some grave oration; but I am going to make you a present, as a kind of curiosity, of some of my poetical amusements. You will receive, then, with this letter, a collection of my verses, which I wrote in order to while away an idle hour upon the road, in the bathing room, or between the time of supper. They were composed upon different occasions, as I found myself in a gay, an amorous, a melancholy, or satirical humour; and, accordingly, the style is sometimes of the florid, and sometimes of the concise kind. I endeavoured, by this variety, to hit different tastes; and some things may be found in them, perhaps, of general relish. If you should meet with any passages which may seem somewhat too wantonly expressed, your reading will supply you with my apology, in the example of those great and venerable names who have gone before me in the same kind of writing, who, without scruple, have employed not only the warmest descriptions, but the plainest terms. This, however, is a liber-

ty I have not allowed myself; not as pretending to more severity, (for why should I?) but because, in truth, I have less courage. Nevertheless, I entirely approve of the rule which Catullus lays down for this kind of compositions:

> Let the poet's conduct be
> Free from wanton levity:
> Not so his Muse—her sportive lay
> Pleases most, when most she's gay.

You must look upon it as an instance of the great value I set upon your judgment, that I venture to submit the whole to your examination, rather than select some of the more finished pieces for your approbation. Indeed, in this kind of miscellaneous collections, what would pass well enough if they were viewed separately, lose all their advantage, by appearing in better company. But a sensible and discerning reader ought not to compare pieces of distinct sorts with one another, but examine each performance apart, and if it be perfect in its kind, not condemn it because it does not equal the beauties of some others of a different nature. But I will say nothing more concerning them: for to attempt to excuse or recommend this idle business by a long preface, would be adding one folly to another. I will only, therefore, premise farther, that I design to give these trifles the title of *Hendecasyllables*,* in allusion to the measure in which the verses are composed. Call them, if you think proper, epigrams, eclogues, or (as many others have) sonnets; in a word, give them what name you

* A verse consisting of eleven syllables.

please, I offer them only as *hendecasyllables*. All I beg of your sincerity is, that you would speak your opinion of them to me, with the same freedom that you would to others. When I ask this, I think I lay you under no difficulty. If, indeed, these little poetical essays were my only or chief productions, it might sound, perhaps, a little harsh to advise me, "to turn my mind to something else;" but you may, with great delicacy and politeness, tell me, "I have something else to mind." Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO FUNDANUS.

IF I can pretend to judgment in any thing, it is undoubtedly in the singular affection which I have for Asinius Rufus. He is a person of the highest merit, and a friend to all good men; in which number, why may I not venture to include myself? He and Tacitus (to whose eminent virtues you are no stranger) are united in the strictest intimacy. If, therefore, you esteem us, you cannot but have the same favourable sentiments of Rufus; for a similitude of manners is, you know, the strongest cement of friendship. He has several children; and in this, as in every thing else, he acts the part of a friend to his country, by supplying it with a numerous race of citizens, which he sees with pleasure extend to a second generation; and this, in an age when even one child is thought a burthen, as it prevents that lucrative adulation which is

usually paid to those who have none.* But he scorns such base views, and thinks himself happy in the title of grandfather; for which he is indebted to Saturius Firmus; a person whom you would esteem as much as I do, if you knew him as well. My design in all this detail, is, to let you see what a numerous family you may oblige by conferring a single favour: a favour for which I apply to you, because I sincerely wish, and assuredly presage, you will soon be in a condition to grant it. I hope and believe you will be consul the approaching year; and, in this persuasion, I am confirmed, both by your own conspicuous merit, and the distinguishing judgment of the emperor. Asinius Bassus, the eldest son of Rufus, solicits

* As luxury prevailed among the Romans, avarice, its sure attendant, increased in proportion; and, among other base methods of gratifying the importunate demands of unbounded desires, the mean practice of paying court to the wealthy, with a view to their fortunes, was extremely common. Horace has exposed this contemptible commerce in his usual agreeable manner, and recommends it as the most infallible method of becoming rich:

——————————"*unde*
"*Divitias ærisque ruam, dic augur, acervos?*"
Dixi equidem, et dico: captes astutus ubique
Testamenta senum; neu, si vafer unus et alter
Insidiatorem præroso fugerit hamo,
Aut spem deponas, aut artem, illusus, omittas.
Sat. V. l. 2.

"Tell, for you know, my friend, prophetic tell,
What shall I do, my empty bags to swell?"
Have I not said it? and I say it still,
Court each rich dolt, and slide into his will:
Though here or there, perhaps, a rogue be found
Too wise to gorge the hook he nibbles round,
Lose not thy hopes, nor quit, deceived, the game.

the quæstorship at the same time. I know not whether I ought to say, (which, however, the father would have me both say and think, though Bassus is too modest to allow it) that he is a greater man than his father. Were I to represent his abilities, his probity, his learning, his genius, his application, and his parts, as great as you will most certainly find them; you, who never yet suspected my veracity, would scarce conceive he deserved the character. I wish our age so abounded in merit, as to supply you with some who might justly stand in competition with him. In that case, I should be the first to advise you, to consider well where to fix your choice: but the misfortune is—however, I will not speak of my friend in an invidious strain. I will only say he is a young man, who deserves you should look upon him in the same relation as our ancestors used to consider their quæstors,* that is, as your son. Men of your character for wisdom should choose their political children of the same cast they would wish nature to form their real ones. Will it not be an honour to your consulship to have a quæstor whose father has been prætor, and whose relations consuls, yet who, though but a youth, reflects back to his family (and that by their own confession) as much glory as he derives from them? Let me entreat you, then, to comply with my request and my advice. In which, if I seem premature, I hope you will pardon me, when you consider, that in a city where

* The connection between a consul and his quæstor, &c. was considered, by the ancient Romans, as a tie of the strongest kind. *Vid. Cic. in Verrem.*

every thing is seized by the man who can first lay hold of it, it is staying much too late to wait till precisely the proper time: besides, there is a pleasure in anticipating one's wishes. Allow Bassus then to revere you already as consul, and do you, in return, esteem him as your quæstor: and may I, who love you both, enjoy that double pleasure. The truth is, you have each so equal a claim to my affection, that, as I shall be obliged to promote, with all my assiduity and credit, your respective interests in this affair, though they should happen to be distinct; so it will be extremely agreeable if I may be able to serve both those ends at the same time by my good offices to this young man; in a word, if I may be supported in this solicitation by your assistance, to whose judgment and suffrage the senate pays so great a regard. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO VALERIUS PAULINUS.

REJOICE with me, my friend, not only upon my account, but your own, and that of the public; for rhetoric is still held in honour. Being lately engaged to plead in a cause before the centumviri, the crowd was so great that I could not get to my place, without passing through the tribunal where the judges sat. And I have this flattering circumstance to add farther, that a young nobleman having lost his robe in the press, stood in his vest to hear me during the seven hours I was speaking; and my success was equal to the great fatigue I

sustained. Come on then, my friend, and let us earnestly pursue our studies, nor screen our own indolence under pretence of that of the public. Never, we may rest assured, will there be wanting hearers and readers, so long as we can supply them with orators and authors worthy of their attention. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

TO GALLUS.

YOU acquaint me that Cæcilius, the consul elect, has commenced a suit against Correllia, and earnestly beg me to undertake her cause in her absence. As I have reason to thank you for your information, so I have to complain of your entreaties; without the first, indeed, I should have been ignorant of this affair, but the last was unnecessary, as I want no solicitations to comply, where it would be ungenerous in me to refuse; for can I hesitate a moment to take upon myself the protection of a daughter of Correllius? It is true, indeed, though there is no particular intimacy between her adversary and me, we are, however, upon good terms. It is true, likewise, that he is a person of great rank, and who has a claim to particular regard from me, as he is entering upon an office which I have had the honour to fill; and it is natural for a man to be desirous those dignities should be treated with the highest respect, which he himself once possessed. Yet, these considerations have little weight, when I reflect that it is the daughter

of Correllius whom I am to defend. The memory of that excellent person, than whom this age has not produced a man of greater dignity, rectitude, and good sense, is indelibly impressed upon my mind. I admired him before I was acquainted with him; and, contrary to what is usuall they case, my esteem increased in proportion as I knew him better: indeed, I knew him thoroughly, for he treated me without reserve, and admitted me to share in his joys and his sorrows, in his gay and his serious hours. When I was but a youth, he esteemed, and (I will even venture to say) revered me, as if I had been, in every respect, his equal. When I solicited any post of honour, he supported me with his interest, and recommended me by his testimony; when I obtained it, he was my introducer and my attendant; when I exercised it, he was my guide and my counsellor. In a word, wherever my interest was concerned, he exerted himself with as much zeal and alacrity as if he had possessed all his former health and vigour. In private, in public, and with the emperor, how often has he advanced and supported my credit and interest! It happened once, that the conversation before the emperor Nerva, turned upon the hopeful young men of that time, and several of the company were pleased to mention me with applause; he sat for a little while silent, which gave what he said the greater weight; and then, with that air of dignity to which you are no stranger, "I must be reserved," said he, "in my praises of Pliny, because he does nothing without my advice." By which single sentence he gave me a

greater character than I could presume even to aspire to; as he represented my conduct to be always such as wisdom must approve, since it was wholly under the guidance of one of the wisest of men. Even in his last moments, he said to his daughter, (as she often mentions,) "I have, in the course of a long life, raised up many friends to you; but there is none in whom you may more assuredly confide, than Pliny and Cornutus:" a circumstance I cannot reflect upon, without being deeply sensible how much it is incumbent upon me, to endeavour so act up to the opinion so excellent a judge of mankind conceived of me; I shall, therefore, most readily give my assistance to Correllia in this affair, and willingly hazard any displeasure I may incur by appearing in her cause. Though I should imagine, if, in the course of my pleadings, I should find an opportunity to explain and enforce, more at large than I can in a letter, the reasons I have here mentioned, and upon which I rest at once my apology and my glory; her adversary (whose suit may, perhaps, as you say, be entirely unprecedented, as it is against a woman,)* will not only excuse, but approve my conduct. Farewell.

* Alluding, perhaps, to some legal privilege attached to the sex by the jurisprudence of ancient Rome.

LETTER XVIII.

TO ANTONINUS.

CAN I give you a stronger instance how much I admire your Greek epigrams, than by having endeavoured to imitate some of them in a Latin translation? I confess, however, (partly from the weakness, or, as Lucretius calls it, *the poverty*, of our native language) much to their disadvantage; yet, if clothed in a Roman dress, and by my unskilful hand, you should be able to discover some beauty still remaining in them; what must their charms be, when adorned with all the majesty of the Greek language, and formed by your superior genius! Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO HISPULLA.

AS you are an exemplary instance of tender regard to your family in general, and to your late excellent brother in particular, whose affection you returned with equal warmth; and have not only shewn the kindness of an aunt, but supplied the loss of a tender parent to his daughter;* you will hear, I am persuaded, with the greatest pleasure, that she behaves worthy of her father, her grandfather, and yourself. She possesses an excellent understanding, together with consummate prudence,

* Calphurnia, Pliny's wife.

and gives the strongest testimony of the purity of her heart, by her fondness of her husband. Her affection to me has given her a turn to books ; and my compositions, which she takes a pleasure in reading, and even in getting by heart, are continually in her hands. How full of tender solicitude is she, when I am going to speak in any cause ? How kindly does she rejoice, when I have happily discharged the office ? While I am pleading, she places persons to inform her, from time to time, how I am heard, what applauses I receive, and what success attends the cause. When, at any time, I recite my works, she conceals herself behind some curtain, and, with secret rapture, enjoys my praises. She sings my verses to her lyre, with no other master but Love, the best instructor, for her guide. From these happy circumstances, I derive my most assured hopes, that the harmony between us will increase with our days, and be as lasting as our lives. For it is not my youth or my person, which time gradually impairs ; it is my character, and my glory, of which she is enamoured. But what less could be expected, from one who was trained by your hands, and formed by your instructions ; who was early familiarized, under your roof, with all that is worthy and amiable, and was first taught to conceive an affection for me, by the advantageous colours in which you were pleased to represent me ? As you revered my mother with all the respect due even to a parent, so you kindly directed and encouraged my tender years ; presaging, from that early period, all that my wife now fondly imagines

I really am. Accept, therefore, of our united thanks, that you thus, as it were designedly, formed us for each other. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO MAXIMUS.

I HAVE already acquainted you, with my opinion of the several parts of your work, as I perused them; I must now tell you my general thoughts of the whole. It is a beautiful performance; the sentiments are manly and sublime, conceived in all the variety of a strong and pregnant imagination, expressed in chaste and elegant language; the figures happily chosen, and a copious vein of eloquence runs through the whole, and raises a very high idea of the author's talents. You seem impelled by the energy of a powerful genius, actuated by deep sorrow, mutually assisting and animating each other; for your genius gives majesty to your grief, and your grief adds strength to your genius. Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO VELIUS CEREALIS.

HOW severe a fate has attended the daughters of Helvidius! these two sisters are both dead in childbed, after having each of them been delivered of a girl. This misfortune pierces me with the sharpest sorrow; as, indeed, to see two such amiable young women fall a sacrifice to their fruitful-

ness, in the prime and flower of their years, is a misfortune which I cannot too deeply lament. I lament for the unhappy condition of the poor infants, who are thus become orphans from their birth; I lament, for the sake of the disconsolate husbands of these ladies; and I lament, too, for my own. The affection I bear to the memory of their late father is inviolable, as my defence* of him in the senate, and as all my writings witness. Of three children, which survived him, there remains but one; and his family, which had lately so many noble supports, now rests upon a single person! It will, however, be a considerable mitigation of my affliction, if fortune should, at least, kindly spare *him*, and render him worthy of his father and grandfather:† and I am so much the more anxious for his welfare and good conduct, as he is the only branch of the family remaining. You know the softness and solicitude of my heart, where I have any tender attachments; you will not wonder, then, that I have many fears, where I have many hopes. Farewell.

* See Book IX. Let. 13.

† The famous Helvidius Priscus, who signalized himself in the senate, by the freedom of his speeches in favour of liberty, during the reigns of Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian. In the reign of the latter he was put to death, by the order of the senate, though contrary to the inclination of the emperor, who countermanded the execution; but it was too late, the executioner having performed his office before the messenger arrived. Tacitus represents him as acting, in all the various duties of social li with one consistent tenor of uniform virtue; superior to all temptations of wealth, of inflexible integrity, and unbroken fortitude.—*Hist.* Lib. 4. 5.

LETTER XXII.

TO RUFUS.

I LATELY attended our excellent emperor* as one of his assessors, in a cause wherein he himself presided. A certain person left by his will, a fund for the establishment of the gymnastic games† at Vienna.‡ These, my worthy friend Trebonius Rufinus, when he exercised the office of Duumvir,§ had ordered to be totally abolished; and it was now alledged against him, that he had no authority for suppressing them. He spoke in his own cause with a success equal to his great eloquence; and what particularly recommended his speech was, that he delivered it with a certain suitable boldness becoming a true Roman and a good citizen, rising up in his own justification. When the sentiments of the assessors were taken, Junius Mauricus (who, in spirit and integrity, has no superior) declared his opinion, that the liberty of solemnizing these games should not be restored to the people of Vienna;

* Trajan.

† So called, because the persons who performed in these games were naked. They consisted principally of running, wrestling, and boxing.

‡ Vienna in Dauphiné, a province in France.

§ The Duumviri, so called from their number being only two, were magistrates in the corporate cities, who exercised, in their respective corporations, the same functions as the consuls at Rome; they were chosen out of the body of decuriones, who were a kind of senators.—SIGONIUS *de jure Ital.* lib. 3. 4.

"and, would to God," added he, "they could be abolished at Rome too!" This, you will say, was an instance of great firmness;* but it is nothing uncommon in Mauricus. He gave as strong a proof of his honest freedom, before the late emperor Nerva. Being at supper one evening with that prince, and a few select friends, Vejento† was placed next to the emperor: After I have named the man, I need say no more to raise your indignation. The discourse happened to turn upon Catullus Messalinus, who had a soul as dark as his body; for he was not only cursed with want of sight, but want of humanity. As he was uninfluenced either by fear, shame, or compassion, he proved a very proper instrument, in the hand of Domitian, to execute his black purposes against every man of worth. The company gave their sentiments of the sanguinary counsels and infamous characters of this man. "And what," said the emperor, "would have been his fate had he lived now?" "To have supped with us," replied Mauricus. But to return from this long digression, into which, however, I did not fall undesignedly: it was determined that these games should be suppressed; for they had greatly depraved the morals of the people of Vienna; and they have had the same general effect among us. But the vices of the Viennenses are confined within their own walls; ours have a more extensive influence: for it is in the body-politic, as in the nat-

* Trajan was fond of this kind of entertainments, and had himself exhibited some very splendid ones, upon his triumph over the Dacians.

† An infamous sycophant, frequently mentioned by Juvenal.

ural, those disorders are most dangerous that flow from the head. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII.

TO POMPONIUS BASSUS.

I HAD the great pleasure to hear from our common friends, that you dispose of your time in your agreeable retirement from public business, with that dignity which becomes a man of your distinguished wisdom; that you mix the exercises of riding or sailing with contemplation, and learned conferences with much reading; in a word, that you are daily increasing that fund of knowledge you already possess. This is to grow old in a way worthy of a man who has discharged the highest offices both civil and military, and who gave himself wholly up to the service of the commonwealth, whilst it became his years. Our youth and manhood we owe to our country, but our declining age is due to ourselves; as the laws themselves seem to suggest, which resign us to ease, when we are arrived beyond our 60th year.* How do I long for the time when I shall enjoy that happy privilege! When my years shall justify my following the example of your honourable retreat! When my retiring from active life shall not be deemed indolence, but repose! Farewell.

* A senator was not obliged to attend the business of the house after that age.—SENECA *de Civ. vit.* c. 29.

LETTER XXIV.

TO VALENS.

BEING engaged lately in a cause before the centumviri, it occurred to me, that, when I was a young man, I had also pleaded in the same court. I could not forbear, as usual, to pursue the reflection, and to consider if there were any of those advocates then present, who were joined with me in the former cause; but I found I was the only person remaining, who had been counsel in both; such changes does the instability of human nature, or the vicissitudes of fortune produce! Death had removed some; banishment others; age and infirmities had silenced *those*, while *these* were withdrawn to enjoy the happiness of retirement; *one* was at the head of an army; and the indulgence of the prince has exempted *another* from the burthen of civil employments. What turns of fortune have I experienced even in my own person! It was the cultivation of my talents for oratory, that first raised me into notice; it was the same talents that afterwards occasioned my disgrace; and it is the same talents that have advanced me again. The friendships of the wise and good, at my first appearance in the world, were highly serviceable to me; the same friendships afterward proved extremely prejudicial to my interest; and *now*, they are my ornament and support. If you compute the time in which these revolutions have happened, it is but a few years; if you number the incidents, it seems an

age: and it is a lesson that will teach us to check both our despair and our presumption, when we observe such a variety of events rapidly revolving in so narrow a circle. It is my custom, to communicate to my friend all my thoughts, and to set before him the same reflections and examples by which I regulate my own conduct: and such is the purpose of the present letter. Farewell.

LETTER XXV.

TO MAXIMUS.

I MENTIONED to you, in a former letter,* that I apprehended the method of voting by ballots would be attended with inconveneinces; and so it has proved. At the last election of magistrates, upon some of the tablets were written several pieces of pleasantry, and even indecencies; in one, particularly, instead of the name of the candidate, was inserted the names of those who espoused his interest. The senate was extremely exasperated at this insolence; and, with one voice, threatened the vengeance of the emperor upon the author: but he lay concealed, and possibly might be in the number of those who expressed the warmest indignation. What must one think of such a man's private conduct, who, in public, upon so important an affair, and at so solemn a time, could indulge himself in such indecent liberties, and dare to act the droll in the face of the senate? *Who will know it*, is the argu-

* Book III. Let. 20.

ment that prompts little and base minds to commit these indecorums. Secure from being discovered by others, and unawed by any self-respect, they take their pencil and tablets; and hence arise these buffooneries, which are fit only for the stage. What method shall we take, what remedy apply, against this abuse? Our disorders, indeed, in general, have every where eluded all attempts to restrain them. But these are evils much too deeply rooted for our limited power to eradicate, and must be left to the care of that superior authority, who, by these low, but daring insults, has daily fresh occasions of exerting all his pains and vigilance. Farewell.

LETTER XXVI.

TO NEPOS.

THE request you make me to revise and correct that copy of my works which you have taken the pains to collect, I shall most willingly comply with; as, indeed, there is nothing I ought to perform with more readiness, especially at your instance. When a man of such dignity, literature, and eloquence, deeply engaged in business, and entering upon the important government of a province, has so good an opinion of my compositions, as to think them worth taking with him, how am I obliged to endeavour, that this part of his baggage may not seem an useless embarrassment! My first care, therefore, shall be, that they may attend you with all the advantages possible; and my next, to supply you, at your return, with others, which you may not

think undeserving to be added to the former; for I can have no stronger encouragement to increase the number of my writings, than the being assured of finding a reader of your taste and discernment. Farewell.

LETTER XXVII.

TO FALCO.

I HAVE been attending, these three days, the recital of Augurinus's sonnets, which I heard not only with great pleasure, but even admiration. They are conceived with much delicacy of sentiment, are expressed with great elegance, and abound with numberless strokes of the tender and the sublime, of wit and of satire. I am of opinion, there has not, for these many years, appeared any thing more finished of the kind; if, indeed, my great affection for him, and the praises he bestows upon me, do not bias my judgment. He introduces his poems with observing, that I sometimes amuse myself with writing verses. If I can recollect the second line of this introduction, (for the rest I remember, and have often repeated,) you shall judge if my opinion of them is just:

Sweetly flow my tender lays,
Like Calvus' or Catullus' strains,
(Bards approved of ancient days!)
Where love in all its softness reigns.

Yet wherefore ancient poets name?
Let Pliny my example be:
Him the sacred nine inflame;
More than ancient poets he!

To mutual love he tunes the lay,
While far the noisy bar he flies:
Say then ye grave, ye formal, say,
Who shall gentle love despise?

You see with what sprightliness of imagination, what propriety of sentiment, what clearness of expression, the whole is wrought up; and in this taste, I will venture to assure you, you will find his performance in general: I will send it to you as soon as it shall be published. In the mean while, admit this excellent youth into a share of your affection, and congratulate our age on the production of such a genius, whose virtues render him still more illustrious. He spends his time partly with Spurinna, and partly with Antoninus, having the honour to be the relation of one and the companion of both. You will easily imagine what uncommon virtues he must possess, who is thus the favourite of two such venerable old men: for the poet's observation is most undoubtedly true:

Those who in close society are joined,
In manners equal you will ever find;*

Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO SEVERUS.

HERENIUS SEVERUS, a person of distinguished erudition, is exceedingly desirous to have the pictures of two of your countrymen, Cornelius

* Euripides.

Nepos, and Titus Cassius, to adorn his library; and has entreated me, if they are to be met with, where you are, (as probably they may,) that I would procure copies for him. That care I recommend to you, rather than to any other, not only because I know your friendship for me readily inclines you to comply with my requests, but as being sensible of the high regard you have for learning and all her friends; and that your affection and veneration for those who have proved an ornament to your country, is equal to that which you bear towards your country herself. I beg you, therefore, to employ some skilful hand in this work; for if it is difficult to catch a likeness from the life, it is much more so to preserve it in a copy; from which I desire you will not suffer the painter to deviate, for even the better. Farewell.

LETTER XXIX.

TO ROMANUS.

INDEED, my friend, you must, at all rates, take your place upon the bench the next time the court sits. In vain would your indolence repose itself under my protection; for there is no absenting with impunity. Behold that severe prætor, the resolute Licinius Nepos, fining even a mighty senator for the same neglect! the senator pleaded his cause in person, but pleaded in suppliant tone. The fine, 'tis true, was remitted; but sore was his dismay, but humble his intercessions, but sad his necessity of being obliged to ask pardon. All magis-

trates in that office, you will tell me, perhaps, are not thus rigid. You may, however, be mistaken; for though, indeed, to be the author and reviver of an example of this kind, may be an act of severity; yet, when once it is introduced, even lenity herself may follow the precedent. Farewell.

LETTER XXX.

TO LICINIUS.

I HAVE brought you, as a present out of the country, a query which well deserves the consideration of your extensive knowledge. There is a spring which rises in a neighbouring mountain, and, running among the rocks, is received into a little banquetting-room, from whence, after the force of its current is a little restrained, it falls into the Larian Lake.* The nature of this spring is extremely surprising; it ebbs and flows regularly three times a-day. The increase and decrease is plainly visible, and very amusing to observe. You sit down by the side of the fountain, and, whilst you are taking a repast, and drinking its water, which is extremely cool, you see it gradually rise and fall. If you place a ring, or any thing else, at the bottom, when it is dry, the stream reaches it by degrees, till it is entirely covered, and then gently retires; and, if you wait, you may see it thus alternately advance and recede three successive times. Shall we say that some secret current of air stops and opens the fountain-head, as it approaches to or re-

* See B. 1. Let. 3. note.

tires from it, as we see in bottles, and other vessels of that nature, where there is not a free and open passage, though you turn their necks downwards, yet the outward air obstructing the vent, they discharge their contents as it were by starts? Or may it not be accounted for upon the same principle as the flux and reflux of the sea? or as those rivers which discharge themselves into the sea, meeting with contrary winds and the swell of the ocean, are forced back into their channels; so may there not be something that checks this fountain, for a time, in its progress? Or is there rather a certain reservoir that contains these waters in the bowels of the earth, which, while it is recruiting its discharges, the stream flows more slowly, and in less quantity; but when it has collected its due measure, it runs again in its usual strength and fulness? Or, lastly, is there I know not what kind of subterraneous counterpoise, that throws up the water when the fountain is dry, and stops it when it is full? You, who are so well qualified for the enquiry, will examine the reasons* of this won-

* There are several of these periodical fountains in different parts of the world, as we have some in England. *Laywell*, near Torbay, is mentioned, in the Philosophical Transactions, No. 104. p. 909. to ebb and flow several times every hour. The reasons of this kind of springs are of no very easy solution, and the causes assigned by modern philosophers are scarce more satisfactory than those pointed out by the ancients: perhaps they do not depend upon any general principle, but arise from different causes, according to their respective situations. The conjecture which Mr. Addison offers, in accounting for those he saw in Switzerland, seems plausible, and equally applicable to this fountain mentioned by Pliny; as it is probable it took its rise from the same mountains. "We saw," says that inimitable author, in his description of Ge-

derful phenomenon; it will be sufficient for me if I have given you a clear description of it. Farewell.

neva and the lake, "in several parts of the Alps that bordered upon us, vast pits of snow; as several mountains, that lie at a greater distance, are wholly covered with it. I fancied the confusion of mountains and hollows I here observed, furnished me with a more probable reason than any I have met with, for these periodical fountains in Switzerland, which flow only at particular hours of the day. For as the tops of these mountains cast their shadows upon one another, they hinder the sun's shining on several parts, at such certain times, so that there are several heaps of snow which have the sun lying upon them for two or three hours together, and are in the shade all the day afterward. If, therefore, it happens, that any particular fountain takes its rise from any of these reservoirs of snow, it will naturally begin to flow on such hours of the day as the snow begins to melt: but as soon as the sun leaves it again to freeze and harden, the fountain dries up, and receives no more supplies till about the same time the next day, when the heat of the sun again sets the snows a running, that fall into the same little conduits, trees, and canals, and by consequence break out, and discover themselves always in the same place." ADDISON's *Travels*, 353.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK FIFTH.

LETTER I.

TO SEVERUS.

A SMALL legacy, which was lately left me, has given me much greater pleasure than I should have received by a far more considerable bequest, unattended with similar circumstances. Pomponia Gratilla, having disinherited her son, Assidius Curianus, appointed me, and Sertorius Severus, of prætorian rank, together with several eminent Roman knights, her co-heirs. The son applied to me to give him my share of the inheritance, in order to make use of my name, as an example to the rest of the joint-heirs; but offered, at the same time, to enter into a secret agreement with me to return my proportion. I told him, it was by no means agreeable to my character, to seem to act one way, when, in truth, I was acting another; and that there was something of meanness in making presents to a man of his fortune, who had no children; besides, it would not at all answer the purpose at

which he was aiming. Indeed, (I added) if I were to withdraw my claim, it might be of some service to him; and this I was ready and willing to do, if he could prove to me that he was unjustly disinherited.—"Let me prevail with you, then," said he, "to be my arbitrator in this case." After a short pause, I told him I consented to his proposal; "for why," said I, "should I not have as good an opinion of my own impartial disinterestedness, as you seem to have? But remember I am not to be prevailed upon to decide the point in question against your mother, if it should appear she had just reason for what she has done."—"Be it agreeable to your inclination," he replied, "which I am sure is always to act according to justice." I called to my assistance Corellius and Frontinus, two of the most considerable lawyers which Rome at that time afforded. Attended with those friends, I heard the cause in my chamber. Curianus said every thing which he thought could favour his pretensions, to whom (as there was nobody but myself to defend the character of Gratilla) I made a short reply; after which I retired with my friends to deliberate upon the case; and then returning, acquainted Curianus that it was our opinion his conduct had justly drawn upon him his mother's displeasure. Some time afterwards, Curianus commenced a suit in the *Centumviral* court against all the co-heirs except myself. The day appointed for the trial approaching, the rest of the co-heirs were desirous of compromising the affair; not out of any diffidence of their cause, but from a distrust of the times. They were apprehensive that what

had been the case of many others might happen to them, and, from a civil suit, it might end in a criminal one; as there were some amongst them to whom the friendship of Gratilla and Rusticus* might prove extremely prejudicial: they, therefore, desired me to talk with Curianus. Accordingly I had conference with him in the temple of *Concord*.—"Suppose," said I, "your mother had left you the fourth part of her estate, or even suppose she had made you sole heir, but had exhausted so much of the estate in legacies, that there would not be more than a fourth part remaining to you, could you justly have complained? you ought to be contented, therefore, if, being absoluteiy disinherited, as you are, the heirs are willing to relinquish to you a fourth part; which, however, I will increase, by contributing my proportion. You know you did not commence any suit against me; so that the prescription which I have gained by two years peaceable possession, secures my share from any claim you can set up against it. But, to induce you to agree to the proposals on the part of the other co-heirs, and that you may be no sufferer by the peculiar respect you shew to me, I offer to advance my proportion with them."

The silent satisfaction of my own conscience is not the only pleasure this concession has afforded me; it has contributed also to the honour of my character. For it is the same Curianus who has left

* Gratilla was the wife of Rusticus: Rusticus was put to death by Domitian, and Gratilla banished. It was a sufficient crime in the reign of that execrable prince to be even a friend of those who were obnoxious to him. See B. 7. let. 33. last note.

me the legacy I mentioned in the beginning of my letter; and I received it as a very distinguishing mark, if I do not flatter myself, of his approbation of my conduct. I have given you this detail, because, in all my joys and sorrows, I look upon you as myself, and I thought it would be unkind not to communicate to so tender a friend whatever occasions me a sensible gratification; as I confess this circumstance has proved: for I do not pretend to such refined strains of philosophy, as to be indifferent, when I think I have acted as becomes a man of probity, whether my actions meet with that approbation which is in some sort their reward. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO FLACCUS.

THE thrushes* I received from you were so excellent, that my Laurentinum is not capable of supplying me with any thing in this tempestuous season, either of the land or sea kind, to make you a suitable return. I have only, therefore, to send you the ineffectual acknowledgments of a barren letter: an exchange more unequal, I confess, than that famous one of the subtle Diomed.† But your

* These birds, of which there are several sorts, were in high reputation among the Romans, and generally had a place upon all elegant tables.

† Alluding to the story in Hom. Iliad, where Glaucus and Diomed having an interview between the two armies, they discovered that a connexion of friendship and hospitality had formerly subsisted be-

good-nature will so much the more readily grant this idle epistle a pardon, as it confessedly does not deserve one. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO ARISTO.

AMONG the many agreeable and obliging instances I have received of your friendship, your not concealing from me the long conversation which lately passed at your house concerning my verses, and the various judgments pronounced upon them, is by no means the least. There were some of the company, it seems, who did not disapprove my little poems, but, at the same time, censured me in a free and friendly manner, for employing myself in composing and reciting them. I am so far, however, from desiring to extenuate the charge, that I willingly acknowledge myself still more deserving

tween their families. Accordingly, Diomed proposes an exchange of their arms, as a token of reciprocal amity.

Τευχεα δ' αλληλοις επαμειψομεν· οφρα και οιδε
Γνωσιν, οτι, &c.——Lib. 6. v. 230.

Now change we arms, and prove to either host,
We guard the friendship of the line we boast.
Thus having said——
Their hands they join, their mutual faith they plight.
Brave Glaucus then each narrow thought resigned,
(Jove warmed his bosom and enlarged his mind)
For Diomed's brass arms of mean device,
For which nine oxen paid (a vulgar price)
He gave his own of gold divinely wrought;
An hundred beeves the shining purchase bought. POPE.

of it; and confess that I sometimes amuse myself with writing verses of the ludicrous and gayer kind. I compose comedies; divert myself with pantomines; read the lyric poets; and enter into the spirit of the most wanton Muse; in short, I am nothing averse from pleasantry, mirth, and gaiety; or, to sum up every kind of innocent amusement in one word, *I am a man.* I am not at all displeased, that those who are ignorant that the most learned, the wisest, and the best of men have amused themselves in the same way, should be surprised at me: but those who know what noble examples I follow, will allow me, I trust, thus to err with those whom it is an honour to imitate, not only in their most serious occupations, but lightest amusements. Is it unbecoming *me* (I will not name any living example, lest I should seem to flatter) but is it unbecoming me to practice what became Tully, Calvus, Pollio, Messala, Hortensius, Brutus, Sulla, Catulus, Scævola, Sulpitius, Varro, the Torquati, Memmius, Getulicus, Seneca, Lucceius, and in our own memory, Virginius Rufus? But if the examples of private men are not sufficient to justify me, I can cite Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Nerva, and Titus. I forbear to add Nero to the catalogue; though I am sensible what is sometimes practised by the worst of men, does not, therefore, degenerate into wrong; on the contrary, it still maintains its credit, if frequently countenanced by the best. In that number Virgil, Cornelius Nepos, and, prior to these, Ennius and Accius, justly deserve the most distinguished place. These last, indeed, were not senators; but propriety of conduct knows no distinc-

tion of rank or title. I recite my works, it is true, and, in this instance, I am not sure I can justify myself by their examples. They, perhaps, might be satisfied with their own judgment: but I have too humble an opinion of mine, to suppose my compositions sufficiently perfect, because they appear so to my own mind. My reasons then for reciting are, that there is a certain reverence for one's audience, which fires the imagination, and excites a more vigorous application; and that I have, by these means, an opportunity of settling any doubts I may have concerning my performance, by observing the general sentiments of my auditors. In a word, I have the advantage of receiving different hints from different persons: and though they should not declare their opinions in express terms, yet the air of a countenance, the turn of a head or eye, the motion of a hand, a whisper, or even silence itself, will easily distinguish their real sentiments from the language of civility. Accordingly, if any one of my audience should have the curiosity to peruse the same performance which he heard me read, he may find several things altered or omitted, and, perhaps too, upon *his* particular judgment, though he did not say a single word to me. But I am defending my conduct in this particular, as if I had actually recited my works in public, and not in my own house before a select party of my friends; a numerous appearance of whom has, upon many occasions, been held an honour, but never surely a reproach. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO VALERIANUS.

THE fact which I am going to mention, though in itself of no great importance, may be attended with very considerable consequences. Sollers, a person of prætorian rank, petitioned the senate for leave to hold a fair upon his estate. He was opposed in this by the deputies from the Vicentini,* who employed Tuscillinus Nominatus as their counsel. The cause was adjourned; and at the next meeting the deputies appeared unattended with their counsel, complaining that they had been *grossly deceived:* an expression, which whether it dropped from them in the warmth of resentment, or that they really had reason to think so, I will not determine. Nepos, the prætor, asked them whom it was they had retained? They replied, the same person who was counsel for them in the former instance. Being further asked, whether he then appeared for them without any gratuity? They replied, that they had given him six thousand sesterces,† and afterwards presented him with a second fee of one thousand denarii.‡ Upon which, Nepos moved that Nominatus should be ordered to attend: and this is all that was done in the affair that day. But, unless I am greatly mistaken, the enquiry will not

* Of Vicenza, a city in the territories of Venice.

† About 48l. of our money.

‡ About 30l. of our money.

end there; for one may observe in several instances, that the slightest sparks have lighted up a long train of very unexpected consequences. And now I have sufficiently raised your curiosity, I suppose to make you desirous I should inform you of the rest; unless, perhaps, you should choose to gratify it by coming to Rome, and had rather see than read the sequel. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO MAXIMUS.

I AM deeply afflicted with the news I have received of the death of Fannius, not only as having lost in him a friend whose eloquence and polite manners I admired, but a guide also, by whose judgment I was often directed; as, indeed, he possessed a most penetrating genius, improved and enlighted by great experience. There are some circumstances attending his death, which aggravate my concern: he left behind him a will which had been made a considerable time before his decease, by which it happens that his estate is fallen into the hands of those who had incurred his displeasure, whilst his greatest favourites are excluded. But what I particularly regret, is, that he has left unfinished, a very noble work in which he was engaged. Notwithstanding his full employment at the bar, he had commenced a history of those persons who were put to death or banished by Nero; and had completed three books. They are written with great elegance and precision; the style is

pure, and preserves a proper medium between the simple narrative and the historical: and as they were very favourably received by the public, he was the more desirous of being able to finish the remainder. The hand of death is ever, in my opinion, too severe and too sudden, when it falls upon such as are employed in some immortal work. The sons of sensuality, who have no views beyond the present hour, terminate with each day the whole purpose of their existence; but those who look forward to posterity, and endeavour to transmit their names with honour to future generations, by useful labours;—to such, death is always immature, as it ever snatches them from amidst some unfinished design. Fannius, long before his death, had a strong presentiment of what has happened: he dreamed one night, that, as he was sitting in his study with his manuscript before him, Nero entered, and, placing himself by his side, took up the three first books of this history; which he read through, and then departed. This dream greatly alarmed him, and he looked upon it as an intimation that he should not carry on this history any farther than Nero had read, and so the event has proved. I cannot reflect upon this accident, without lamenting that he was prevented from accomplishing a work, which had cost him so many painful vigils, as it suggests to me, at the same time, reflections on my own mortality, and the fate of my writings: and I am persuaded the same apprehensions alarm you for those in which you are at present employed. Let us then, my friend, while yet

we live, exert all our endeavours, that death, whenever it shall arrive, may find as little as possible to destroy. Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO APOLLINARIS.

THE kind concern you expressed when you heard of my design to pass the summer at my villa* in Tuscany, and your obliging endeavours to dissuade me from going to a place which you think unhealthy, are extremely pleasing to me. I confess, the atmosphere of that part of Tuscany, which lies towards the coast, is thick and unwholesome: but my house is situated at a great distance from the sea, under one of the *Apennine* mountains, which, of all others, is most esteemed for the clearness of its air. But that you may be relieved

* This was Pliny's principal seat, lying about one hundred and fifty miles from Rome, and in which he usually resided during the summer season. The reader will observe, therefore, that he considers it in a very different manner from that of Laurentinum, (his winter villa) both with respect to the situation and the house itself. *Cluver*, in his geography, has placed this villa a little above *Tifernum Tiberinum*, now called *Citta di Castello*, where our author built a temple at his own expence. This has given room to imagine that, possibly, there may be yet some remaining traces of this house to be discovered in Tuscany, near a town, which the Italians call *Stintignano*, in the neighbourhood of *Ponte di San Stefano*, about ten miles north of an episcopal city now called *Borgo di San Sepulchro*. (Plans per Felibien, p. 65.) If, after having traversed this noble villa, the reader should be curious to know how Pliny disposed of his time, when he retired to it, he may turn to the 36th letter of the 9th book.

from all apprehensions on my account, I will give you a description of the temperature of the climate, the situation of the country, and the beauty of my villa, which I am persuaded you will read with as much pleasure as I shall relate. The winters are severe and cold, so that myrtles, olives, and trees of that kind which delight in constant warmth, will not flourish here; but it produces bay-trees* in great perfection; yet, sometimes, though, indeed, not oftener than in the neighbourhood of Rome, they are killed by the severity of the seasons. The summers are exceedingly temperate, and continually attended with refreshing breezes, which are seldom interrupted by high winds. If you were to come here and see the numbers of old men who have lived to be grand-fathers and great grand-fathers, and hear the stories they can

* In the original it is *laurus*, which the ingenious Mr. Martyn, professor of botany in Cambridge, has given very strong reasons for believing is not the same tree with our laurel, but the bay-tree. "Our laurel, (that author observes) "was hardly known in Europe till the latter end of the 16th century; about which time it seems to have been brought from Trebizond to Constantinople, and from thence into most parts of Europe. The laurel has no fine smell, which is a property ascribed to the *laurus*, by Virgil in the second eclogue:

Et vos, o lauri, carpam, et te proxime, myrte,
Sic positæ, quoniam suaves *miscetis* odores.

And in the 6th Æneid;

Odoratum *lauri nemus.*

Nor is the laurel remarkable for crackling in the fire, of which there is abundant mention with regard to the *laurus*. These characters agree very well with the bay-tree, which seems to be most certainly the *laurus* of the ancients; and is, at this time, frequent in the woods and hedges of Italy." Notes upon Georg. I. v. 306.

entertain you with of their ancestors, you would fancy yourself born in some former age. The disposition of the country is the most beautiful that can be imagined. Figure to yourself an immense amphitheatre; but such as the hand of nature could only form. Before you lies a vast extended plain, bounded by a range of mountains, whose summits are covered with lofty and venerable woods, which supply variety of game: from thence, as the mountains decline, they are adorned with under-woods. Intermixed with these, are little hills of so strong and fat a soil, that it would be difficult to find a single stone upon them; their fertility is nothing inferior to the lowest grounds; and though their harvest, indeed, is somewhat later, their crops are as well matured. At the foot of these hills the eye is presented, wherever it turns, with one unbroken view of numberless vineyards, terminated by a border, as it were, of shrubs.—From thence you have a prospect of the adjoining fields and meadows below. The soil of the former is so extremely stiff, and, upon the first ploughing, turns up in such vast clods, that it is necessary to go over it nine several times, with the largest oxen and the strongest ploughs, before they can be thoroughly broken; whilst the enamelled meadows produce trefoil, and other kinds of herbage, as fine and tender as if it were but just sprung up, being continually refreshed by never-failing rills. But though the country abounds with great plenty of water, there are no marshes; for, as it lies upon a rising ground, whatever water it receives without absorbing, runs off into the Tiber.

This river, which winds through he middle of the meadows, is navigable only in the winter and spring, at which seasons it transports the produce of the lands to Rome; but its channel is so extremely low in summer, that it scarcely deserves the name of a river; towards the autumn, however, it begins again to renew its claim to that title.—You could not be more agreeably entertained, than by taking a view of the face of this country from the top of one of our neighbouring mountains: you would suppose that not a real, but some imaginary landscape, painted by the most exquisite pencil, lay before you: such an harmonious variety of beautiful objects meets the eye, which way soever it turns. My villa is so advantageously situated, that it commands a full view of all the country round; yet you approach it by so sensible a rise, that you find yourself upon an eminence, without perceiving you ascended. Behind, but at a great distance, stand the Apennine mountains. In the calmest days we are refreshed by the winds that blow from thence, but so spent, as it were, by the long tract of land they travel over, that they are entirely divested of all their strength and violence before they reach us. The exposition of the principal front of the house is full south, and seems to invite the afternoon sun in summer (but somewhat earlier in winter) into a spacious and well-proportioned portico, consisting of several members, particularly a porch built in the ancient manner. In the front of the portico is a sort of terrace, embellished with various figures, and bounded with a box hedge, from whence you descend by an easy slope, adorned with the repre-

sentation of divers animals, in box, answering alternately to each other, into a lawn overspread with the soft, I had almost said the liquid, Acanthus:* this is surrounded by a walk† enclosed with tonsile ever-greens, shaped into a variety of forms. Beyond it is the Gestatio, laid out in the form of a circus,‡ ornamented in the middle with box cut in numberless different figures, together with a plantation of shrubs, prevented by the sheers from shooting up too high: the whole is fenced in with a wall covered by box, rising by different ranges to the top. On the outside of the wall lies a meadow, that owes as many beauties to nature, as all I have been describing *within* does to art; at the end of which are several other meadows and

* Sir William Temple supposes the *Acanthus* of the ancients to be what we call *Pericanthe*. Modern botanists term it garden *bears-foot*; (See Martyn on Georg. 4. v. 123.) but Mr. Castel, in his observations upon this passage, with more probability, imagines, by its character here, that it resembles moss. See note, p. 243.

† This walk is called in the original *Ambulatio*, as what I have ventured to translate a *Terrace*, is by Pliny termed *Xystus*. The *Ambulatio* seems to be what we properly call a walk; the *Gestatio* was a place appropriated to the taking of exercise in their vehicles; and the *Xystus*, in its original signification, according to the definition given by Vitruvius, was a large portico, wherein the athletic exercises were performed; though it is plainly used in this place for an open walk, ornamented much in the manner of our old-fashioned parterres: but its being raised above the walks which lay in the front, seems to justify its being called a *Terrace*.

‡ The *Circus* was a place set apart for the celebration of several public games, particularly the chariot-race. Its form was generally oblong, having a wall quite round, with ranges of seats for the convenience of spectators.

fields interspersed with thickets. At the extremity of this portico stands a grand dining-room, which opens upon one end of the terrace; as from the windows there is a very extensive prospect over the meadows up into the country, from whence you also have a view of the terrace, and such parts of the house which project forward, together with the woods enclosing the adjacent hippodrome.* Opposite almost to the centre of the portico, stands a square edifice, which encompasses a small area, shaded by four plane-trees, in the midst of which a fountain rises, from whence the water, running over the edges of a marble bason, gently refreshes the surrounding plane-trees, and the verdure underneath them. This apartment consists of a bed-chamber, secured from every kind of noise, and which the light itself cannot penetrate; together with a common dining-room, which I use when I have none but intimate friends with me. A second portico looks upon this little area, and has the same prospect with the former I just now described. There is, besides, another room, which, being situated close to the nearest plane-tree, enjoys a constant shade and verdure: its sides are incrusted half-way with carved marble; and from thence to the ceiling a foliage is painted with birds intermixed among the branches, which has an effect altogether as agreeable as that of the carving: at the basis of which, a little fountain, playing through several small pipes into a vase, produces a most pleasing murmur. From a corner of this portico you enter

* A part of the garden, so called. See note, p. 241.

into a very spacious chamber, opposite to the grand dining-room, which, from some of its windows, has a view of the terrace, and from others, of the meadow; as those in the front look upon a cascade, which entertains at once both the eye and the ear; for the water, dashing from a great height, foams over the marble bason that receives it below. This room is extremely warm in winter, being much exposed to the sun; and in a cloudy day, the heat of an adjoining stove very well supplies his absence. From hence you pass through a spacious and pleasant undressing-room into the cold-bath-room, in which is a large gloomy bath: but if you are disposed to swim more at large, or in warmer water, in the middle of the area is a wide bason for that purpose, and near it a reservoir from whence you may be supplied with cold water to brace yourself again, if you should perceive you are too much relaxed by the warm. Contiguous to the cold-bath is another of a moderate degree of heat, which enjoys the kindly warmth of the sun, but not so intensely as that of the hot-bath, which projects farther. This last consists of three divisions, each of different degrees of heat: the two former lie entirely open to the sun; the latter, though not so much exposed to its rays, receives an equal share of its light. Over the undressing-room is built the tennis-court, which, by means of particular circles,* admits of different kinds of games. Not

* "These circles were probably no other than particular marks made on the floor, the success of their play depending on the ball's lighting in such a circle after it had been struck, which was the adversaries' business to prevent; and the many sorts of exercises this

far from the baths, is the stair-case leading to the enclosed portico, after you have first passed through three apartments: one of these looks upon the little area with the four plane-trees round it; the other has a sight of the meadows; and from the third you have a view of several vineyards: so that they have as many different prospects as expositions. At one end of the inclosed portico, and, indeed, taken off from it, is a chamber that looks upon the hippodrome, the vineyards, and the mountains; adjoining is a room which has a full exposure to the sun, especially in winter; and from whence runs an apartment that connects the hippodrome with the house: such is the form and aspect of the front. On the side, rises an enclosed summer-portico, which has not only a prospect of the vineyards, but seems almost contiguous to them. From the middle of this portico, you enter a dining-room, cooled by the salutary breezes from the Apennine valleys; from the windows in the back front, which are extremely large, there is a prospect of the vineyards; as you have also another view of them from the folding-doors, through the summer-portico. Along that side of this dining-room, where there are no windows, runs a private stair-case for the greater conveniency of serving at entertainments: at the farther end is a chamber, from whence the eye is pleased with a view of the vineyards, and (what is not less agreeable) of the

room was made for, might be diversified by lines or circles on the walls or floor; like the game of tennis, which, though it takes up one entire room, may serve for several games of the like nature." *Castel's Remarks on Tuscum*, p. 110.

portico. Underneath this room is an enclosed portico, somewhat resembling a grotto, which, enjoying in the midst of the summer heats its own natural coolness, neither admits nor wants the refreshment of external breezes. After you have passed both these porticos, at the end of the dining-room stands a third, which, as the day is more or less advanced, serves either for winter or summer use. It leads to two different apartments, one containing four chambers, the other three; each enjoying, by turns, both sun and shade. In the front of these agreeable buildings, lies a very spacious hippodrome,* entirely open in the middle, by which means the eye, upon your first entrance, takes in its whole extent at one glance. It is encompassed on every side with plane-trees, covered with ivy;† so that while their heads flourish with their own foliage, their bodies enjoy a borrowed verdure; and thus, the ivy twining round the trunk and branches, spreads from tree to tree, and connects them to-

* The *Hippodromus*, in its proper signification, was a place among the Grecians set apart for horse-racing and other exercises of that kind. But it seems here to be nothing more than a particular walk, to which Pliny, perhaps, gave that name, from its bearing some resemblance in its form to the public places so called.

† "What the *Hederæ* were, that deserved a place in a garden," says Sir William Temple, in his Essay on Gardening, "I cannot guess, unless they had sorts of ivy unknown to us." But it does not seem necessary to have recourse to that supposition; for there are two sorts among us, which are very beautiful plants, the one called the silver-striped ivy, the other the yellow variegated ivy. The former, perhaps, is the *palentes Heredæ* of Virgil; (Georg. 4.) which epithet some of the critics, not attending to the different kinds of ivy, have, injudiciously, changed for *palantes*.

gether. Between each plane-tree are planted box-trees, and behind these bay-trees, which blend their shade with that of the planes. This plantation, forming a straight boundary on both sides of the hippodrome, bends at the farther end into a semi-circle, which, being set round and sheltered with cypress-trees, varies the prospect, and casts a deeper gloom; while the inward circular walks (for there are several) enjoying an open exposure, are perfumed with roses, and correct, by a very pleasing contrast, the coolness of the shade with the warmth of the sun. Having passed through these several winding-alleys, you enter a straight walk,* which breaks out into a variety of others, divided by box hedges. In one place, you have a little meadow; in another, the box is cut into a thousand different forms;† sometimes into letters, expressing the name of the master; sometimes that of the artificer: whilst here and there little obelisks rise inter-

* Here seems to begin what we properly call the *Garden*, and is the only description of a *Roman* one, which has come down to us. Virgil, indeed, mentions that of his Corycian friend's, but he only gives an account of the plants which that contented old man cultivated, without describing the form in which this little spot was laid out.

† It is very remarkable, that this false taste in gardening, so justly rejected by modern improvements in that agreeable art, was introduced among the Romans at a time, when one should little expect to meet with any inelegancies in the polite refinements of life. Marius, the friend of Julius Cæsar, and peculiar favourite of Augustus, (of whom there is still extant a letter to Cicero, greatly admired for the beauty of its sentiments and expression,) is said to have first taught his countrymen this monstrous method of distorting nature, by cutting trees into regular forms.—*Columel.* l. 12. c. 44.

mixed alternately with fruit-trees: when, on a sudden, in the midst of this elegant regularity, you are surprised with an imitation of the negligent beauties of rural nature: in the centre of which lies a spot surrounded with a knot of dwarf plane-trees.* Beyond these is a walk planted with the smooth and twining acanthus,† where the trees are also cut into a variety of names and shapes. At the upper end is an alcove of white marble, shaded with vines,

* The plane-tree was much cultivated among the Romans, upon account of its extraordinary shade, and they used to nourish it with wine (*Plin. Hist. Nat.*) instead of water, believing, as the ingenious Sir William Temple observes, "this tree loved that liquor, as well as those who used to drink under its shade." Virgil mentions it as *ministrantem—potantibus umbras.* Georg. 4. It was a favourite tree, likewise, among the Grecians:

Αυλαρ εμοι γλυκυς υπνος υπο πλαταγω βαθυφυλλω,
Και παγας φιλεοιμι τον εγγυθεν ηχον ακουειν.
Mosch Idyl.

Give me beneath the plane-tree's shade to lie,
While tinkling fountains sweetly murmur by.

† It is probable the acanthus, here mentioned, is not the same plant with that described above; it is certain, at least, there were different sorts of them. It seems to be of the kind which Virgil speaks of in the 4th Georgic:

Aut flexi *tacuissem vimen Acanthi;*

whatever that was, which is by no means clear. The ingenious botanist mentioned before, supposes it to be *Brankursine;* and that Dryden was mistaken in translating this passage,

———The winding *Trail*
Of Bear's-foot———

"For," says he, "it is by no means a trailing plant." But there is reason, it should seem, to believe the contrary; for it is not very probable, that Virgil should use the epithet *Flexus,* in allusion, as

supported by four small Carystian pillars.* From this bench the water gushing through several little pipes, as if it were pressed out by the weight of the persons who repose themselves upon it, falls into a stone cistern underneath, from whence it is received into a fine polished marble bason, so artfully contrived, that it is always full without ever overflowing. When I sup here, this bason serves for a table, the largest sort of dishes being placed round the margin, while the smaller ones swim about in the form of little vessels and water-fowl. Corresponding to this, is a fountain which is incessantly emptying and filling; for the water, which it throws up a great height, falling back into it, is, by means of two openings, returned as fast as it is received. Fronting the alcove, (and which reflects as great an ornament to it, as it borrows from it,) stands a summer-house of exquisite marble, the doors whereof project and open into a green enclosure; as from its upper and lower windows, the eye is presented with a variety of different verdures. Next to this

this gentleman imagines, to the story of the tile and the basket, which gave the first hint to the inventor of the Corinthian capital. It is much more likely and natural, that he should join an epithet to acanthus, which denoted a certain general quality attending it, than any foreign and accidental circumstance, especially one so extremely remote. And this conjecture seems to be strongly supported by Pliny's calling it *Flexuosus*.

* This marble came from Carystus, (now called Caristo,) in Eubœa, an island in the Archipelago, which has since changed its name into *Negroponte*. From hence, likewise, it is said, the Romans fetched that famous stone, out of which they spun a sort of incombustible cloth, wherein they wrapped the bodies of their dead, and thereby preserved their ashes distinct and unmixed with those of the funeral pile.

is a little private recess, (which, though it seems distinct, may be laid into the same room,) furnished with a couch; and, notwithstanding it has windows on every side, yet it enjoys a very agreeable gloominess, by means of a spreading vine which climbs to the top, and entirely overshades it. Here you may recline and fancy yourself in a wood; with this difference only, that you are not exposed to the weather. In this place a fountain also rises and instantly disappears: in different quarters are disposed several marble-seats, which serve, no less than the summer-house, as so many reliefs after one is wearied with walking. Near each seat is a little fountain; and, throughout the whole hippodrome, several small rills run murmuring along, wheresoever the hand of art thought proper to conduct them, watering here and there different spots of verdure, and, in their progress, refreshing the whole.

And now, I should not have hazarded the imputation of being too minute in this detail, if I had not proposed to lead you into every corner of my house and gardens. You will hardly, I imagine, think it a trouble to read the description of a place, which I am persuaded would please you were you to see it; especially as you have it in your power to stop, and, by throwing aside my letter, sit down as it were, and rest yourself as often as you think proper. I had, at the same time, a view to my own gratification: as I confess I have a very great affection for this villa, which was chiefly built or finished by myself. In a word, (for why should I conceal from my friend my sentiments, whether right or wrong?) I look upon it as

the first duty of every writer frequently to throw his eyes upon his title-page, and to consider well the subject he has proposed to himself; and he may be assured if he precisely pursues his plan, he cannot justly be thought tedious; whereas, on the contrary, if he suffers himself to wander from it, he will most certainly incur that censure. Homer, you know, has employed many verses in the description of the arms of Achilles, as Virgil also has in those of Æneas; yet neither of them are prolix, because they each keep within the limits of their original design. Aratus, you see, is not deemed too circumstantial, though he traces and enumerates the minutest stars: for he does not go out of his way for that purpose, he only follows where his subject leads him. In the same manner, (to compare small things with great,) if, endeavouring to give you an idea of my house, I have not deviated into any article foreign to the purpose, it is not my letter which describes, but my villa which is described, that is to be considered as large. But not to dwell any longer upon this digression, lest I should myself be condemned by the maxim I have just laid down; I have now informed you why I prefer my Tuscan villa, to those which I possess at Tusculum, Tiber, and Preneste.* Besides the advantages already mentioned, I here enjoy a more profound retirement, as I am at a farther distance from the business of the town, and the interruption of troublesome avocations. All is calm and composed;

* Now called Frascati, Tivoli, and Palestrina, all of them situated in the *Campagna di Roma*, and at no great distance from Rome.

circumstances which contribute, no less than its clear air and unclouded sky, to that health of body and cheerfulness of mind which I particularly enjoy in this place; both which I preserve by the exercise of study and hunting. Indeed, there is no place which agrees better with all my family in general; I am sure, at least, I have not yet lost one (and I speak it with the sentiments I ought) of all those I brought with me hither: may the gods continue that happiness to *me*, and that honour to my *villa*! Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO CALVISIUS.

IT is certain that the law does not allow a corporate city to inherit any estate by will, or to receive a legacy. Saturninus, however, who has appointed me his heir, had left a fourth part of his estate to our corporation of Comum; which devise he afterwards changed into an absolute legacy of 400,000 sesterces.* This bequest, in a legal view, is undoubtedly void; but, considered as the clear and express will of the deceased, ought to stand firm and valid: a consideration, in my opinion, (though I am afraid the lawyers will not be pleased with what I say,) of higher regard than any law whatsoever, especially when the interest of one's native province is concerned. It would be extremely inconsistent in me, who made them a

* About L.3,200 of our money.

present of eleven hundred thousand sesterces* out of my own patrimony, to withhold a benefaction from them of little more than a third part of that sum, out of an estate which is entirely adventitious. You, who, like a true citizen, have the same affection for this our common municipal town, will join with me, I dare say, in these sentiments. I wish, therefore, you would, at the next assembly of the Decurii, acquaint them, in a respectful manner, how the law stands in this case, and, at the same time, inform them, that I shall not take advantage of it, but will pay them the 400,000 sesterces according to the directions in the will of Saturninus. You will represent this donation as *his* present, and *his* liberality; I only claim the merit of complying with his request. I forbear writing to the senate concerning this affair, fully relying upon your friendship and prudence, and being assured that you are both able and willing to act for me upon this occasion as I would for myself; besides, I am afraid I should not seem to have so cautiously guarded my expressions in a letter, as you will be able to do in a speech. The countenance, the gesture, and even the tone of voice, governs and determines the sense of the speaker; whereas, a letter, being destitute of these advantages, is more liable to the malignant construction of those who are inclined to misinterpret its meaning. Farewell.

* About L.8,800 of our money.

LETTER VIII.

TO CAPITO.

YOU are not singular in the advice you give me to undertake the writing of history: it is a work that has been frequently pressed upon me by several others of my friends, and in which I have some thoughts of engaging. Not because I have any confidence of succeeding in this way; (it would be presuming upon the event of an experiment which I have never yet made,) but because it is a noble employment to rescue from oblivion those who deserve to be eternally remembered; and, by extending the reputation of others, to advance at the same time our own. Nothing, I confess, so strongly stimulates my breast, as the desire of acquiring a lasting name: a passion highly worthy of the human heart, especially of *his*, who, not being conscious of any ill, is not afraid of being known to posterity. It is the continual subject, therefore, of my thoughts,

By what fair deed I too a name may raise;*

for to that I moderate my wishes: the rest,

And gather round the world immortal praise,

is much beyond my hopes:

Though yet†—However, the former is sufficient;

* Virgil, Georg. 1. sub. init.

† Part of a verse from the fifth Æneid, where Menestheus, one of the competitors in the naval games, who was in some danger

and the writing of history is, perhaps, the only means I may promise myself to acquire it. Oratory and poetry, unless carried to the highest perfection, are talents of small recommendation; but history, in whatever manner executed, is always entertaining. Mankind are naturally inquisitive; and so fond of having this turn gratified, that they will listen with attention to the plainest matter of fact, and the most common tale. But, besides, I have an example in my own family that inclines me to engage in a work of this kind; my uncle and adoptive father* having acquired great reputation as a very accurate historian: and the philosophers, you know, recommend it to us to tread in the steps of our ancestors, when they have led the way to us in the right path. If you ask me, then, why do I not immediately enter upon the task? my reason is this; I have pleaded some very important causes, and (though I am not extremely sanguine in my

of being distaneed, exhorts his men to exert their utmost vigour to prevent such a disgrace. The reader, perhaps, will not be displeased to see the whole passage, as it is excellently translated by Mr. Pitt; which I am the more inclined to transcribe, not only as it will show the propriety of my author's application of the verse; but as I am glad of any opportunity of quoting from a poet whose translation of the Æneid does honour to the English language:

Now, now, my friends, your utmost power display;
Rise to your oars, and sweep the watery way:
Though yet—but ah! let those the palm obtain,
Those whom thy favours crown, great monarch of the main!
But to return the lags of all the day,
Oh! wipe, my friends, that shameful stain away.

* See Book 3. Let. 5.

hopes concerning them) I have determined to revise my speeches, lest, for want of this remaining labour, all the pains they cost me should be thrown away, and they, with their author, be buried in oblivion: for, with respect to posterity, the work that was never finished, might as well have never been begun. You will think, perhaps, I might correct my pleadings, and write a history at the same time: I wish, indeed, I were capable of executing that double labour at the same time; but they are each such important undertakings, that either of them separate is abundantly sufficient for my powers. I was but nineteen when I first appeared at the bar; and yet it is only now at last I understand (and that, in truth, but imperfectly,) what is essential to constitute a complete orator. How then shall I be able to support the joint weight of an additional burden? It is true, history and oratory have in many points a general resemblance; yet, in those very articles in which they seem to agree, there are several circumstances wherein they differ. Narration is common to them both; but narration of a distinct kind. The former contents itself frequently with common and familiar facts; the latter requires splendid, elevated, and extraordinary events: strength and sinew are sufficient in *that*, but beauty and ornament are essential to *this*: the excellency of the *one*, consists in a strong, grave, and close style; of the *other*, in a diffusive, flowing, and harmonious diction: in short, the words, the emphasis, and whole turn and structure of the respective periods, are extremely different in these two arts. For, as Thucydides observes, there is a

wide distance between compositions which are calculated for a *present purpose*, and those which are designed to remain as *lasting monuments* to posterity; by the first of which expressions he alludes to oratory, and by the other to history. For these reasons I am not inclined to blend together two performances of such distinct natures, which, as they are each of the highest rank, necessarily, therefore, require an undivided attention; lest, confounded by a crowd of incongruous ideas, I should introduce into the one what is only suitable to the other. Therefore, (to speak in the language of our bar,) I must *beg leave that the cause may be adjourned.* In the mean while, I refer it to your consideration, from what period I shall commence my history. Shall I take it up from those remote ages which have been treated of already by others? In this way, indeed, the materials will be ready prepared to my hands, but the collating of the several historians will be a work of great labour: or, shall I treat only of the present times, and in which no other author has gone before me? If so, I may probably give offence to many, and please but few. For, in an age so over-run with vice, you will find infinitely more to condemn than approve; yet your praise, though ever so lavish, will be deemed too reserved; and your censure, though ever so cautious, too severe. However, this does not at all discourage me; for I want not resolution to bear testimony to truth. I expect, then, that you prepare the way which you have pointed out to me, and determine what subject I shall fix upon for my history; that when I shall be

ready to enter upon the task you have assigned me, I may not be delayed by some new difficulty. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO SATURNINUS.

YOUR letter made very different impressions upon me, as it brought me news which I both rejoiced and grieved to receive. It gave me pleasure when it informed me you were detained in Rome; and though you will tell me that circumstance affords you none, yet I cannot but rejoice at it, since you assure me you remain there upon my account, and defer the recital of your work till my return: for which I am greatly obliged to you. But I was much concerned at that article of your letter, which mentioned the dangerous illness of Julius Valens: though, indeed, with respect to himself, it ought to affect me with other sentiments, as it cannot but be for his advantage, the sooner he is relieved by death from a distemper of which there is no hope he can ever be cured. But what you add concerning Avitus, who died in his return from the province where he had been quæstor, is an accident too justly demanding our sorrow. His dying on board a ship, at a distance from his brother, whom he tenderly loved, and from his mother and sisters, are circumstances, which, though they cannot affect him now, yet undoubtedly embittered his last moments, and aggravate the affliction of those friends he has left behind. How se-

vere is the reflection, that a youth of his well-formed disposition should become extinct in the prime of life, and snatched from those high honours to which his virtues, had they been permitted to grow to their full maturity, would certainly have raised him! How did his bosom glow with the love of the fine arts! How many volumes has he perused! How many treatises has he transcribed!—but the fruits of his labours are now perished with himself, and for ever lost to posterity. Yet why indulge my sorrow?—a passion which, if not restrained, always magnifies the slightest circumstances, and finds additional causes to aggravate our grief. I will put an end, therefore, to my letter, that I may to the tears which yours has drawn from me. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO ANTONINUS.

I AM never more sensible of the superior excellency of your verses, than when I endeavour to imitate them. As the hand of the painter must always fail when perfect beauty sits for the picture, so I labour to catch the graces of my original, but still fall short of them. Let me conjure you, then, to continue to supply us with many more such excellent models, which every man must wish to imitate, but few, perhaps none, will ever be able to equal. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO TRANQUILLUS.

IT is time you should acquit the promise my verses gave to our common friends, of your works. The world is every day impatiently enquiring after them; and there is some danger of your being summoned, in *form*, to give an account of your delay. I am myself a good deal backward in publishing, but you are still slower. You must hasten your hand, however; otherwise the severity of my satire may, perhaps, extort from you what the blandishments of my softer muse could not obtain. Your work is already arrived to that degree of perfection, that the file can only weaken, not polish it. Allow me, then, the pleasure of seeing your name in the title-page of a book, and suffer the works of my dear Tranquillus to be recited and transcribed, to be bought and read. It is but fair, and agreeable to our mutual friendship, that you should give me in return the same pleasure you receive from me. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO FABATUS.*

YOUR letter informs me that you have erected a noble public portico,† as a memorial o

* Grandfather to Calphurnia, Pliny's wife.

† These porticos, which were carried to an extreme degree of magnificence, served for various uses; sometimes for the assembly of the senate, sometimes for stands of the most curious merchandize.

yourself and your son ; and that, the next day after the ceremony of opening it, you engaged to repair and beautify the gates of our city at your own charge ; thus it is that you rise from one act of munificence to another ! I take a part in every thing that concerns your glory ; which, from the alliance that subsists between us, in some degree redounds to mine ; and am pleased to see the memory of my father-in-law delivered down to posterity by such beautiful structures. I rejoice, too, at the honour which, by this means, results to our native province ; and as every thing that tends to her advantage is highly agreeable to me, by what hand soever it may be conferred, so particularly when it is by yours. I have only to wish, that heaven may continue to cherish in you this generous spirit, and grant you many years in which to exert it ; for your bounty, I am well persuaded, will not terminate here, but extend itself to farther acts of munificence. Generosity, when once she is set forward, knows not how to stop ; and the more familiar we are with the lovely form, the more enamoured we become of her charms. Farewell.

But the general use they were put to was the pleasure of walking in them, like the present piazzas in Italy.—*Fabric. Descript. Rom.* cap. 13. Here likewise works of genius were publicly recited, and the philosophers held their disputations. The famous Pœcile Portico, or picture gallery at Athens, must have afforded the noblest scene of this kind imaginable to a lover of the imitative arts ; Polygnotus, Panænus, and all the great masters of that elegant age, having contributed to embellish it with the finest productions of their pencils.—Vid. *Meursii. Ath. At.* lib. i. cap. 5.

LETTER XIII.

TO SCAURUS.

HAVING thoughts of publishing a little speech which I have composed, I invited some of my friends, whose judgments I respect, to attend the recital; and, that I might be more secure of hearing the truth of their sentiments, I selected only a small number. I have a double view in these rehearsals: the first is, that the solicitude of being approved by the audience may excite my attention; the next, that those errors which partiality to myself concealed from my own observation, may be pointed out to me. I succeeded in my design, and my friends obliged me with their sincere opinions; as I likewise discovered, in my turn, some passages which required correction. I send you the piece, therefore, as it is now altered. The occasion of my composing it will appear from the title; and for the rest I refer you to the speech, which I hope you will peruse so carefully, as not to stand in need of a preface. I entreat you to tell me sincerely your sentiments of the whole, and of its several parts; I shall be more disposed to suppress or publish it, as your judgment shall incline either way. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO VALERIANUS.

YOU desire me to inform you (agreeably to my promise*) what success attended Nepos in his accusation of Tuscillinus Nominatus. The latter being brought before the senate, pleaded his own cause, though, indeed, no person appeared to support the accusation. On the contrary, the deputies from the Vicentini, were so far from attempting to prove their charge, that they favoured his defence. The sum of what he urged in his own behalf was, that it was his courage, and not his integrity, had failed him; that he set out with a design of pleading the cause, and actually came into the senate for that purpose, but, being discouraged by his friends, he withdrew; that they dissuaded him from persisting to oppose (especially in the senate) the inclinations of a senator, who did not contend so much for the fair itself, as for his own credit and character, which he looked upon as concerned in this cause; that if he should not desist, he would suffer greater indignities than in his former pleading. (And there were some, though, indeed, but a few, who expressed high indignation at his speech.) He proceeded to implore the clemency of the senate, with tears in his eyes; prudently endeavouring, throughout his whole speech, (as he is a man extremely well versed in the arts of oratory,) to appear

* See Letter IV. of this Book.

rather to sue for pardon than for justice. Afranius Dexter, the consul elect, moved for acquitting him; and the purport of his speech was to this effect: That Nominatus would have acted more prudently if he had gone through the cause of the Vicentini with the same resolution he began it: however, since it did not appear he had been guilty of this neglect with any fraudulent design, and that he had not been convicted of any thing which merited public animadversion, it was his opinion he ought to be acquitted, but that he should return to the Vicentini whatever gratuity he had received from them. This motion was approved by the whole senate, except Flavius Aper: his opinion was, that he should be suspended from exercising the profession of an advocate during five years; and although he could not prevail with any member to adopt his sentiments, he obstinately persisted in them. He even compelled Dexter, who spoke first on the opposite side, to take an oath, that he really thought the motion he* had made was for the benefit of the republic; agreeably to a law which he produced concerning the assembling of the senate.† But this, notwithstanding it was certainly legal, was opposed by some, who thought it a reflection upon Dexter, as if he had been unduly influenced in his opinion. But before the votes of the house were collected, Nigrinus, a tribune of the

* Dexter.

† The law alluded to is not now to be found entire in any Roman writer; but it appears, from certain scattered passages in different ancient authors, to have contained, among other directions, the article mentioned in the text.

people, read a very elegant and sensible remonstrance, wherein he strongly complained, that the profession of the law was become venal, and that the advocates took money even to betray the cause of their clients; that they made a shameful trade of their function; and that, instead of honour, which was formerly their only reward, they now lived upon the spoils of their fellow-citizens, from whom they received large and annual stipends. He gave the senate a summary account of the laws which had been made upon this subject, and reminded them, likewise, of their own decrees to the same purpose: he concluded with observing, that since both the authority of the laws, and of the senate, had been contemned, it was highly necessary to address the emperor, that he would be pleased, himself, to interpose, and provide some remedy to so great an evil. Accordingly, a few days after, an edict was published, drawn up with a proper mixture of mildness and severity; for which I refer you to the journals of the public.* I cannot but congratulate myself upon this occasion, that in all the causes in which I have been concerned, I never made any bargain, or received any fee, reward, or even present whatsoever. One ought, no doubt, to avoid whatever is mean and unworthy, not so much because it is illegal, as because it is dishonourable. But still there is great satisfaction in finding the legislature levelling its prohibitions against a practice, which one never suffered one's self to follow. The glory of my conduct may, or rather, indeed, most cer-

* See Book VII. Letter 33. note.

tainly will, be considerably eclipsed, when this restraint shall universally prevail by compulsion, which I always laid upon myself by choice. In the mean time, however, I enjoy the pleasure of my friends' jests; while some tell me I certainly foresaw this edict; and others, that it was particularly levelled against my avarice and extortion. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO PONTIUS.

I WAS at Comum when I heard that Cornutus Tertullus had accepted the serveyorship* of the Æmilian way. This news was inexpressibly agreeable to me, both upon his account and my own: upon *his*, because though ambition should be (as it certainly is) far removed from his heart, yet it cannot but be acceptable to him to receive so great an honour without seeking it; upon *mine*, because it heightens the satisfaction which results from my own office, to see a man of so distinguished a char-

* This was an office of great dignity among the Romans, and usually conferred upon those who had been consuls. Thus Cæsar is mentioned by Plutarch as surveyor of the Appian way. These roads extended to a great distance from the city on all sides; the most noble of which was the Appian, computed to reach three hundred and fifty miles. Mr. Wright, in his Travels, speaking of this road, observes, that "though it be much broken in several places, and travelling over it very bad, in others it is wonderfully well preserved, notwithstanding it be computed near two thousand years old. They are paved with such hard stones, that they are rather polished than worn, and so well joined, that in some places the whole breadth of the way seems one entire piece."

acter as Cornutus, appointed to one of the same nature ;* for, to be placed in the same rank with the worthy, is an honour equal to an increase of dignities. And where, indeed, is the man who exceeds Cornutus in merit and virtue ? Or whose conduct is a more express model of ancient manners ? In saying this, I do not found my judgment upon fame ; which, however, with great justice, speaks of him in the highest terms ; but upon long and repeated experience. We have ever been joined in the same friendships with the most shining characters of both sexes, which this age has produced ; an union that strongly cemented our mutual amity. To these private ties were added those of a more public nature : he was my colleague in the treasury, as well as in the consulship ; and in both instances I could not have acted with a man more agreeable to my wishes. These were opportunities of gaining a thorough knowledge of his uncommon virtues : I followed him, therefore, as a guide, and revered him as a parent, not so much upon account of his age, as his merit. Accordingly, I rejoice no less for my own sake than for his, and upon a public as well as a private consideration ; since virtue is no longer, as formerly,† exposed to the most cruel dangers, but advanced to the noblest dignity. But if I were to indulge the joyous sentiments I feel upon this occasion, I should never have finished my letter. Let me turn, then, to an account of what

* It appears by some ancient inscriptions still remaining, that Pliny was surveyor of the river Tiber, and its banks ; to which office, it is probable, he here alludes.

† Alluding to the times of Nero and Domitian.

I was doing when your messenger arrived. He found me with my wife's grandfather and aunt, together with several other friends, whose company I had not enjoyed for a considerable time: I was traversing my grounds, hearing the complaints of the farmers, running over their tedious accounts, and had before me writings and letters far different from those to which my inclination early devoted me; in a word, I was preparing to return to Rome. For I have obtained but a short leave of absence; and, indeed, the news of this office being conferred on Cornutus, reminds me to hasten to the duties of my own. I hope your favourite *Campania* will resign you about the same time; so that when I return to Rome, not a day may be lost to our social intercourse. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO MARCELLINUS.

I WRITE to you impressed with the deepest sorrow; the youngest daughter of my intimate friend Fundanus is dead! Never, surely, was there a more agreeable and more amiable young person, or one who better deserved to have enjoyed a long, I had almost said an immortal life! She was scarcely fourteen, and yet united the wisdom of age and discretion of a matron, with the sprightliness of youth, and sweetness of virgin modesty. With what an endearing fondness did she hang on her father's neck! How kindly and respectfully behave to us his friends! How affectionately treat all those,

who, in their respective offices, had the care of her education! She employed much of her time in study and reading; indulged herself in few diversions, and entered even into those with singular caution and reserve. With what forbearance, with what patience, with what fortitude, did she endure her last illness! She complied with all the directions of her physicians; encouraged the hopes of her sister and her father; and, when her strength was totally exhausted, supported her spirits by the sole force of her own mind. The vigour of her mind, indeed, continued even to her last moments, unbroken by the pain of a long illness, or the terrors of approaching death; a reflection which renders the loss of her so much the more sensibly to be lamented by us. It is a loss infinitely, indeed, severe! and aggravated by the particular conjuncture in which it happened! She was contracted to a most worthy youth; the wedding-day was fixed, and we were all invited. How sad a change, from the highest joy to the deepest sorrow! How shall I express the wound that pierced my heart, when I heard Fundanus himself (as grief is ever fond of dwelling upon every circumstance to increase the affliction) ordering the money he had designed to lay out upon clothes and jewels for her marriage, to be employed in myrrh and spices for her funeral! He is a man of great good sense and accomplishments, having applied himself, from his earliest youth, to the noblest arts and sciences; but all the maxims of fortitude and philosophy, which he has derived from books, or delivered by his own precepts, he now absolutely rejects; and every firmer

virtue of his heart gives place to paternal tenderness. You will excuse, you will even approve his grief, when you consider what a loss he has sustained! He has lost a daughter, who resembled him in his manners, as well as his person, and exactly copied out all her father. If you should think proper to write to him upon the subject of a calamity so justly to be deplored, let me remind you not to urge the severer arguments of consolation which seem to carry a sort of reproof with them, but to use those only of a gentle and sympathizing humanity. Time will render him more open to the dictates of reason; for as a recent wound shrinks from the hand of the surgeon, but gradually submits to, and even requires the means of cure, so a mind under the first impression of a misfortune, shuns and rejects all the persuasions of reason, but, at length, if applied with tenderness, calmly and willingly resigns itself to consolation. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

TO SPURINNA.

KNOWING, as I do, how much you admire the polite arts, and what satisfaction you take in seeing young men of quality pursue the steps of their ancestors, I seize this earliest opportunity of informing you, that I went to-day to hear Calpurnius Piso read an elegant and spirited poem, he has composed, entitled the *Sports of Love*. His numbers, which were elegiac, were tender, sweet, and flowing, at the same time that they occasionally rose into all the sublimity of diction which the nature of

his subject required. He varied his style from the lofty to the simple, from the close to the copious, from the grave to the florid, with equal genius and judgment. These beauties were much improved and recommended by a most harmonious voice, which a very becoming modesty rendered still more pleasing. A confusion and concern in the countenance of a speaker casts a grace upon all he utters; for there is a certain decent timidity, which, I know not how, is infinitely more engaging than the assured and self-sufficient air of confidence. I might mention several other circumstances to his advantage, and am the more inclined to point them out, as they are exceedingly striking in a person of his age, and are most uncommon in a youth of his quality. But, not to enter into a farther detail of his merit, I will only add, that when he had finished his poem, I embraced him with the utmost complacency; and being persuaded, that nothing is a greater encouragement than applause, I exhorted him to persevere in the paths he had entered, and to shine out to posterity with the same glorious lustre which was reflected upon him from his ancestors. I congratulated his excellent mother, and particularly his brother, who gained as much honour by the generous affection he discovered upon this occasion, as Calpurnius did by his eloquence; so remarkable a solicitude he showed for him when he began to recite his poem, and so much pleasure in his success. May the gods grant me frequently to have it in my power to send you accounts of this nature! for I have a partiality to the age in which I live, and should rejoice to find it not barren of

merit. I ardently wish, therefore, our young men of quality would have something else to show of honourable memorial in their houses than the images* of their ancestors. As for those which are placed in the mansion of these excellent youths, I figure them to myself as silently applauding and encouraging their pursuits, and, (what is a sufficient glory to both the brothers) as recognizing their kindred. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO MACER.

ALL is well with me since it is so with you. You are happy, I find, in the company of your wife and son; and are enjoying the pleasures of the sea, the freshness of the fountains, the verdure of the fields, and the elegancies of a most agreeable villa; for so I judge it to be, since *he*,† who was perfectly happy ere fortune had raised him to what is generally esteemed the highest point of human felicity, chose it for the place of his retirement. As for myself, I am employed at my Tuscan villa in hunting and studying, sometimes alternately, and sometimes both together;‡ but I am not yet able to determine in

* None had the right of using family pictures, or statues, but those whose ancestors, or themselves, had borne some of the highest dignities. So that the *jus imaginis* was much the same thing among the Romans, as the right of bearing a coat of arms among us.—KEN. *Antiq.*

† It is supposed by some commentators, that Pliny alludes here to Nerva; who, being suspected by Domitian, was ordered, by that emperor, to retire to Tarentum, where, without any views of reigning, he quietly sat down in the enjoyment of a private life.

‡ See Book I. Letter 6. and the note there.

which of those pursuits it is most difficult to succeed. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO PAULINUS.

AS I know the humanity with which you treat your own servants, I do not scruple to confess to you the indulgence I show to mine. I have ever in my mind Homer's* character of Ulysses,

Who swayed his people with a father's love.

And the very expression† in our language for the head of a family, suggests the rule of one's conduct towards it. But were I naturally of a rough and hardened cast of temper, the ill state of health of my freedman Zosimus (who has the stronger claim to a humane treatment at my hands, as he now stands much in need of it) would be sufficient to soften me. He is a person of great worth, diligent in his services, and well skilled in literature; but his chief talent, and, indeed, his distinguishing qualification, is that of a comedian, wherein he highly excels. He pronounces, with great judgment, propriety, and gracefulness: he has a very good hand too upon the lyre, and performs with more skill than is necessary for one of his profession. To this I must add, he reads history, oratory, and poetry, as perfectly well as if it had been the sole object of his study. I am the more particular in enumerating his qualifications, that you may see how many

* Odyssey, lib. 5. 11.

† The Latin word for a master of a family, implies a *father* of a family.

agreeable services I receive from him. He is, indeed, endeared to me by the ties of a long affection, which is heightened by the danger he is now in. For nature has so formed our hearts, that nothing contributes more to inflame our passion for any enjoyment, than the apprehension of being deprived of it; a sentiment which Zosimus has given me occasion to experience more than once. Some years ago, he strained his lungs so much by too vehement an exertion of his voice, that he spit blood; upon which account I sent him into Egypt;* from whence, after a long absence, he lately returned, with great benefit to his health. But having again exerted himself for several days together beyond his strength, he was reminded of his former malady, by a slight return of his cough, and a spitting of blood. For this reason, I intend to send him to your farm at Forum-Julii,† having frequently heard you mention it as an exceeding fine air, and recommend the milk of that place as very salutary in disorders of this nature. I beg you would give directions to your people to receive him into your house, and to supply him with what he shall have occasion for; which will not be much; for he is so temperate, as not only to abstain from delicacies, but even to deny himself the necessaries his ill state of health requires. I shall furnish him towards his journey with whatever will be sufficient for one of his abstemious turn, who is coming under your roof. Farewell.

* The Roman physicians used to send their patients in consumptive cases into Egypt, particularly to Alexandria.

† Frejus in Provence, the southern part of France.

LETTER XX.

TO URSUS.

SOON after the Bithynians had finished their prosecution of Julius Bassus, they also impeached their late governor Rufus Varenus; who had been just before (and that, too, at their own request) appointed counsel for them against Bassus. Being introduced into the senate, they petitioned that an enquiry might be made into his conduct. Varenus, on the other hand, begged that all proceedings might be stayed till he could send for the witnesses necessary to his defence; but this being opposed by the Bithynians, that point was debated. I was counsel, (and no unsuccessful one) for Varenus; but whether a truly able advocate or not, you will judge when you read my speech. Fortune has a very considerable share in the event of every cause; the sagacity, the voice, the manner of the orator, even the circumstance of time itself; in a word, the general disposition of the senate, as it is either favourable or adverse to the accused, all conspire to influence the decision. But when a speech is read in the closet, it is stripped of all these external circumstances, and has nothing to fear or hope from favour or prejudice, from lucky or unlucky accidents. Fonteius Magius, one of the Bithynians, replied to me with great pomp of words, and very little to the purpose; a character applicable to many of the Greek orators, as well as to himself. They mistake volubility for copiousness, and thus overwhelm you with an endless torrent of cold and

unaffecting periods.* Julius Candidus used, very justly, to say, "Eloquence is one thing, and loquacity another." Eloquence, indeed, is the talent of very few; or rather, if we believe Marcus Antonius, of none;† but that faculty which Candidus

* This verbose and turgid style, which Pliny here condemns, the elegant Petronius, likewise, mentions with equal contempt, and represents it as having first began to infect the purity of Attic eloquence about this time. This false species of oratory spread to Athens from Asia, where the swelling and highly figurative style has prevailed, from the earliest accounts we have of those people, to this day.—Vid. *Petron. Satir. sub init.*

† The great masters among the ancients, in eloquence, as well as those in all other of the fine arts, heated their imaginations with a certain ideal perfection, which, as they could not explain in what it consisted, so neither, they owned, could they reach in their respective works. But however notional this supreme beauty, this το πρεπον and *decorum*, as it was called, might be, yet it was productive of very real and substantial excellencies; and while the geniuses of the several artists were stretching after this flying form, they reached those glorious productions that have been the admired models to all succeeding ages. Agreeably to this high enthusiasm, Marcus Antonius, who bears a part in Tully's dialogue, entitled *The Orator*, says, that, "in his earlier years, he published a treatise upon that subject, wherein he asserted, that though he had known some few indeed, who deserved to be called orators, in the popular sense of that word, yet he had met with none who had ever arrived at true *eloquence*."—Vid. *Tull. de Orat.* lib. 1. And to that treatise, Pliny, it is probable, here alludes. "All the sciences, indeed, (as a very ingenious author observes,) have their particular chimeras; certain fancied points after which they run, without ever being able to overtake, but which lead, however, to very solid acquisitions. Thus (says that writer) chemistry has its philosopher's stone; geometry, its quadrature of the circle; astronomy, its longitude; mechanics, its perpetual motion: these, though t is impossible to find, it is useful to enquire after. Morality, too, is not without her chimeras; pure disinterestedness and perfect friendship are of that sort: none will ever arrive at them; nev-

called *loquacity*, is common to numbers, and generally attends impudence. The next day, Homulus spoke in defence of Varenus with great art, strength, and elegance; to whom Nigrinus made a very concise, but pertinent and graceful, reply. It was the opinion of Acilius Rufus, the consul elect, that the Bithynians should be permitted to present their information; but he took no notice of the petition of Varenus; which was only another way of putting his negative upon it. Cornelius Priscus, formerly consul, declared, that he thought the request of both parties should be granted; and his opinion prevailed. Thus we gained our point; and, though we had not the authority either of law or usage on our side, yet certainly the thing we insisted upon was perfectly equitable. But I will not, in this place, anticipate my reasons for thinking so, that you may be more impatient to turn to my speech. For if it be true, as Homer sings, that

> ——Novel lays attract our ravished ears;
> But old, the mind with inattention hears:*

I will not suffer the intemperate *loquacity* of my letter to despoil my speech of its principal flower, by depriving it of that novelty which is, indeed, its chief recommendation. Farewell.

ertheless it is proper to have them in view, at least, by that means, several other virtues may be acquired. It is necessary, in all things, to propose to ourselves a certain point of perfection beyond our abilities to reach; for we should never set out if we thought of arriving no farther than we shall in fact. It is expedient, therefore, to have some imaginary term in aim, in order to forward and animate our pursuits.—FONTENELLE, *Dial des Morts*.

* Pope.

LETTER XXI.

TO RUFUS.

I WENT into the Julian court,* to attend a cause, in which, at the next sitting, I was to reply. The judges had taken their seats, the decemviri† were arrived, the eyes of the audience were fixed upon the counsel, and all was hushed in silence and expectation, when an order arrived from the prætor, that the court should be adjourned; a circumstance extremely agreeable to me, who am never so well prepared, but that I am glad of gaining farther time. The occasion of the court's rising thus abruptly, was an edict of Nepos, the prætor for criminal causes, wherein he ordered all persons concerned as plaintiffs or defendants in any cause before him to take notice, that he designed strictly to put in force the decree of the senate, annexed to his edict. This decree was expressed in the following words: "All persons whosoever, that have any law-suits depending, are hereby required and commanded, before any proceedings be had thereon, to take an oath, that they have not given, promised, or engaged to give, any fee or reward to any advocate, upon account of his undertaking their cause." In these terms, and many others equally full and express,

* A court of justice.

† The decemviri seem to have been magistrates for the administration of justice, subordinate to the prætors, who (to give the English reader a general notion of their office) may be termed lords chief-justices, as the judges, here mentioned, were somewhat in the nature of our juries.

the lawyers are prohibited to make their profession venal. However, after the cause shall be decided, they are permitted to accept a gratuity of ten thousand sesterces.* The prætor for civil causes, being alarmed at the unexpected edict of Nepos, gave us this welcome relaxation, in order to take time to consider, whether he should follow the example. In the mean while, the town is much divided in its sentiments of this injunction; some extremely approving, and others as much condemning it. "We have gotten, it seems, at last," say the latter, with a sneer, "a redresser of abuses. But, pray, was there never any prætor before this man? and what are his pretensions, thus forwardly to set up for a reformer?" Others, on the contrary, say, that he has taken a very proper measure upon entering into his office; that he has paid obedience to the laws; considered the decrees of the senate; suppressed a most indecent traffic; and will not suffer the most honourable of all professions to be debased into a sordid commerce of lucre. These are the different reflections which are thrown out upon this occasion; but which side shall be thought to judge most rightly, the result alone will determine. It is the usual custom of the world (though a very unequitable rule of estimation) to pronounce an action to be either right or wrong, as it is attended with good or ill success: and accordingly you shall hear the very same conduct attributed to zeal or folly, to liberty or licentiousness, as the event happens to prove. Farewell.

* About L. 80 of our money.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK SIXTH.

LETTER I.

TO TYRO.

I WAS less sensible of your absence while you were in the country of the Piceni,* and I on the other side the Po,† than I find myself now that I am returned to Rome. Whether it be that the scene where we used to meet naturally excites a more passionate remembrance of you, or that the less distant we are from a friend, the more impatient we feel under the separation, (our desires for a favourite object rising in proportion to our nearer approach towards it,) I know not. But upon whatever principle this difference is to be accounted for, remove the uneasiness of it, I entreat you, by hastening hither; otherwise I shall return again into the country, which I too hastily left, were it only to make the experiment, whether, when you shall not find me at Rome, you will send the same affectionate regrets after *me*, as I have expressed respecting *you* in this letter. Farewell.

* The marquisate of Ancona. † At Comum.

LETTER II.

TO ARRIANUS.

I WILL not say I lament the death of Regulus, but, I confess, I sometimes miss him at the bar. The man, it must be owned, held the study of eloquence in high honour, and was indefatigable in his endeavours to become an orator. If, indeed, he could never leave off the ridiculous custom of anointing his right or left eye,* and wearing a white patch over one side or the other of his forehead, as he was to plead either for the plaintiff or defendant; if he always, with a most foolish superstition, consulted the soothsayers upon the event of every cause in which he was concerned; still all these absurdities proceeded from his profound veneration of eloquence. It was extremely convenient to be concerned in the same cause with him, as he always petitioned the court that his pleadings, and those of the advocates joined with him, might not be limited in point of time; and, also, as he never failed to procure an audience: for what could be more desirable, than, under the protection of an invidious request which you did not make yourself, and before an audience too which you had not the trouble of collecting,† to harangue without interruption, and as long as you thought proper? Nevertheless,

* This silly piece of superstition seems to have been peculiar to Regulus, and not of any general practice.

† This seems to allude to a custom which the author reprehends, Book xi. Letter 14.

Regulus did well to *depart*, though, indeed, he would have done much better had he made his exit sooner; since he might *now*, in the reign of a prince under whom he would have no opportunity of effecting his malevolent purposes, have continued to live on, without having it any longer in his power to be a public mischief. I need not scruple, therefore, I think, to say, I sometimes feel the loss of this man; for, since his death, the custom has prevailed of not allowing, nor, indeed, of asking, more than an hour or two to plead, and sometimes not above half that time. The truth is, our advocates take more pleasure in finishing a cause, than in defending it; and our judges had rather rise from the bench than sit upon it: such is their indolence, and such their disregard to the honour of eloquence, and the interest of justice! But are we wiser than our ancestors? are we more equitable than the laws, which grant so many hours, and days, and adjournments, to a cause? Were our forefathers slow of apprehension, and dull beyond measure? and are we more perspicuous in our oratory, more quick in our conceptions, or more scrupulous in our decisions, because we dispatch our causes in fewer hours than they took days to consider them? What a reproach is it, Regulus, that none could refuse to the importunity of thy vain-glorious solicitations, what few will yield even to the duty of their office! As for myself, whenever I sit upon the bench, (which is much oftener than I appear at the bar,) I always give the advocates as much time as they desire; for I look upon it as highly presuming, to pretend to guess, before a cause is heard, what time the

discussion will require, and to set limits to the examination of a question before one is acquainted with its full extent; especially as the first and most sacred duty of a judge is patience, which, indeed, is itself a very considerable part of justice. But this, it is objected, would give an opening to much impertinent superfluity: I grant it may; yet is it not better to hear too much, than not to hear enough? Besides, how shall you know that what an advocate has farther to offer will be superfluous, till you have heard him? But this, and many other public abuses, will be best reserved to a conversation when we meet; for I know your affection to the commonwealth inclines you to wish, that some means might be found to check at least those grievances, which would now be very difficult absolutely to remove. But, to turn to affairs of private concern, I hope all goes well in your family; mine remains in its usual situation. The happiness I enjoy becomes more acceptable to me by its continuance, and habit renders me less sensible of the infelicities I suffer. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO VERUS.

I AM much obliged to you for undertaking the care of that little farm I gave to my nurse. It was worth, when I made her a present of it, an hundred thousand sesterces;* but the crops having since failed, it has sunk in its value; however, it

* About L. 800 of our money.

will thrive again, I doubt not, under your good management. But what I recommend to your attention is, not so much the land itself, (which yet I by no means except,) as the interest of my particular benefaction; for it is not more her concern than mine, to render it as advantageous as possible. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO CALPHURNIA.*

NEVER was business more uneasy to me, than when it prevented me not only from attending, but following you into Campania.† As at all times, so particularly now, I wish to be with you, that I may be a witness what progress you make in the recovery of your strength, and how the tranquillity, the amusements, and plenty of that charming country agrees with you. Were you in perfect health, yet I could ill support your absence; for even a moment's uncertainty of the welfare of those we tenderly love, is a situation of mind infinitely painful; but, at present, your sickness conspires with your absence to alarm me with a thousand disquietudes. I fear every thing that can befall you; and, as is usual with all under the same anxious apprehensions, suspect most, what I most dread. Let

* His wife.

† Where Fabatus, Calphurnia's grandfather, had a villa. This delightful country is celebrated by almost every classic author, and every modern traveller, for the fertility of its soil, the beauty of its landscape, and temperature of its air. "*Nihil mollius cælo,*" says Florus, "*nihil uberius solo: denique bis floribus vernat.*"—Lib. i. 16.

me conjure you then to prevent my solicitude, by writing to me every day, and even twice a day. I shall be more easy, at least while I am reading your letters; though all my fears will again return the moment I have perused them. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO URSUS.

I ACQUAINTED you in a former letter,* that Varenus obtained leave of the senate to send for his witnesses. This was thought, by many, extremely equitable, though some, with much obstinacy, maintained the contrary; particularly Licinius Nepos, who, at the following assembly of the senate, when the house was going upon other business, resumed this matter after it had been settled, and made a long speech upon the last decree. He concluded with moving, that the consuls might be desired to put the question, whether it was the sense of the senate, that, as in prosecutions founded upon the law concerning bribery and corruption, so in that relating to extortion, a clause should be added, empowering the defendant, as well as the informer, to summon and examine witnesses? This speech was looked upon, by some, as particularly ill-timed; they thought it strange that Nepos should let slip the proper opportunity of animadverting upon the decree, when it was under the consideration of the senate, and raise objections to a decision after it had been determined, and which he might have op-

* Book V. Letter 20.

posed when it was in debate. Jubentius Celsus, the prætor, very warmly reproved him, in a long speech, for presuming to correct the senate. Nepos answered him; Celsus replied; and neither of them were sparing of reflections on each other. But I forbear to repeat what I could not hear without regret; and am, therefore, so much the more displeased with some members of the senate, who ran from Nepos to Celsus, as one or the other was speaking, with the illiberal pleasure of listening to their mutual invectives; sometimes encouraging the one, sometimes the other, and sometimes both; immediately afterwards seeming to reconcile them, and then again animating them to the attack, as if they had been present at some ludicrous spectacle. And I could not observe without great concern, that they were mutually informed what each intended to urge against the other; for Celsus replied to Nepos, as Nepos did to Celsus, out of a writing they respectively held in their hands. This circumstance was occasioned by the indiscretion of their officious friends; and thus these two men abused one another, as if they had previously agreed in what terms to express their resentment. Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO FUNDANUS.

I NEVER wished more to see you in Rome than at this time, and I entreat you, therefore, to come hither; for I want an associate to share with

me in voting and soliciting, respecting an affair in which I very warmly interest myself. Julius Naso is a candidate for an office of considerable honour; he has many competitors, and some of them of great merit; upon which account, as his success will be the more glorious, so it will be the more difficult to secure. I am much divided between hope and fear; and the anxiety I undergo upon this occasion is so great, that I almost forget I am of consular rank, and feel as many uneasy apprehensions as if I were again to become a candidate for every office I have filled. This zeal is justly due to Naso, in return to the long affection he has borne for me. The friendship I entertain for him did not, it is true, descend to him by inheritance; for his father and I were at too great a distance in point of age to admit of any intimacy between us; yet, from my earliest youth, I was taught to look up to the latter with the highest veneration. He was not only an admirer of the polite arts, but the patron of all who cultivated them; as he was a frequent auditor also of Quinctilian and Nicetes, to whom I was at that time a disciple. He was, in short, a man of singular worth and eminence, and one whose memory ought extremely to facilitate the advancement of his son to the honours of the state. But there are numbers in the senate who never knew his father; and although there are many, too, who were well acquainted with him, yet they consist chiefly of that kind of men who never extend their regards beyond the living. For this reason, Naso, without relying upon the character of his father, which is likely to prove of more honour than service to him, must

exert the utmost of his endeavours to recommend himself by his own merit; and, indeed, his conduct has ever been as guarded as if he had governed it with a particular view to the present occasion. The many friendships he has acquired, he has ever cultivated with the strictest fidelity; and particularly singled me out as the object of his esteem and imitation, from the first moment he was capable of forming any judgment of the world. Whenever I plead, he anxiously attends me, and is always of the party when I recite; as he is ever the first to enquire after my works. His brother had the same attachment to me. But he has lost that excellent brother! and it shall be my part to supply his place. It is with grief I reflect upon the immature death of the one, as I lament that the other should be deprived of the assistance of so valuable a relation, and left to depend only on the zeal of his friends. It is that consideration which induces me earnestly to entreat you to return to Rome, and unite your suffrage with mine. It will be of singular advantage to the cause in which I am embarked, if you would appear in it, and become a joint-solicitor with me; for I know your credit and influence is so great, that I am persuaded your applications will render mine more effectual, even with my own friends. Let me request you, then, to break through all obstacles, if any may happen to lie in your way. I have a right to claim your assistance in this conjuncture; your friendship to me, and my credit, both require it. I have undertaken to support the interest of Naso, and the world knows it; the pursuit and the hazard, therefore, is become my

own. In a word, if he obtains this post, all the honour will be his; but if he should be rejected, the repulse will be mine. Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO CALPHURNIA.*

YOU kindly tell me, my absence very sensible affects you, and that your only consolation is in conversing with my works, which you frequently substitute in my place by your side. How agreeable is it to me to know, that you thus wish for my company! and support yourself under the want of it by these consolations! In return, I entertain myself with reading over your letters again and again, and am continually taking them up, as if I had but just then received them; but, alas! they only serve to make me more feelingly regret your absence; for how amiable must *her* conversation be, whose letters have so many charms! Let me receive them, however, as often as possible, notwithstanding there is always some mixture of pain in the pleasure they afford me, as they render me the more sensible of the loss I suffer by my absence. Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO PRISCUS.

YOU know and esteem Attilius Crescens; who, indeed, is there, of any rank or worth, that

* Pliny's wife.

does not? For myself, I profess to have a friendship for him much superior to the common attachments of the world. The places of our nativity are separated only by a day's journey, and we conceived an affection for each other when we were very young; a season when connections of that kind strike the deepest root. Ours improved by years; and so far from being weakened, that it was confirmed by our riper judgments, as those who know us best can witness. He takes pleasure in boasting every where of my friendship; as I do to let the world know, that his honours, his ease, and his interest, are my peculiar concern: insomuch, that, upon his expressing to me, lately, an apprehension that he might receive some insults from a certain person who was entering upon the office of tribune of the people, I could not forbear answering,

> Long as Achilles breathes this vital air,
> To touch thy head no impious hand shall dare.*

I mention this, to show you that I look upon every injury offered to Attilius, as done to myself. But you will be impatient to hear what all this tends to. You must know, then, Valerius Varus, at his death, owed Attilius a sum of money. Though I am acquainted with Maximus, who inherits the estate of Varus, yet there is a much closer friendship between him and you. I beg, therefore, and conjure you by all the affection you feel for me, to take care that Attilius is not only paid the principal which is due to him, but the whole long arrears of interest. He neither covets the property of others,

* Hom. Iliad. lib. i. ver. 88.

nor neglects the care of his own; and as he is not engaged in any lucrative profession, he has nothing to depend upon but his frugality; for as to the polite arts, in which he greatly excels, he pursues them merely from motives of pleasure and fame. In such a situation, the slightest loss presses hard upon a man, and the more so because he has no opportunities of repairing any injury that affects his fortune. Assist us then, I entreat you, in this difficulty, and suffer me still to enjoy the pleasure of his sprightly and diverting conversation; for I cannot bear to see the cheerfulness of my friend overclouded, whose mirth and good-humour dissipates every gloom of melancholy in my own bosom. In a word, as you are well acquainted with the entertaining gaiety of temper which Attilius possesses, I hope you will not suffer any injury to discompose and sour it. You may judge by the warmth of his affection, how bitter his resentments would prove; for a generous and great mind can ill brook an injury when it is joined with contempt. But though *he* could pass it over, yet cannot I; on the contrary, I shall look upon it as a wrong and indignity done to myself, and resent it as one offered to my friend; that is, with double warmth. But, after all, why this air of threatening? rather let me end in the same style I began, by earnestly conjuring you so to act in this affair, that neither Attilius may have reason to imagine (what I should greatly lament) that I neglect his interest, nor that I may have occasion to charge you with being careless of mine; and I certainly shall not, if you have the same regard for the latter as I have for the former. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO TACITUS.

WHEN you recommend Julius Naso to me, respecting the office for which he is a candidate, you are recommending me to myself. However I forgive you; you would have received the same recommendation from me, had you been at Rome, and I absent; in the cause of a friend, one is apt to think nothing is immaterial. Nevertheless, I advise you to address your solicitations to others, assuring yourself I will take an equal share with you in all your applications on his behalf, and support them with my best and warmest endeavours. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO ALBINUS.

I WAS lately at Alsium,* where my wife's mother has a villa, which once belonged to Virginius Rufus.† The place renewed in my mind the sorrowful remembrance of that great and excellent man. He was extremely fond of this retirement, and used to call it *the nest of his old age*. Wherever I turned my eyes, I missed my worthy friend. I felt an inclination to see his monument, but I repented of my curiosity; for I had the mortification to find it remained still unfinished, not from any

* Now Alzia, not far from Como.

† See an account of him in Book ii. Letter 1.

difficulty of the work itself, which is very plain, or rather, indeed, mean; but through the neglect of him to whose care the erection was entrusted. I could not see, without a concern mixed with indignation, the remains of a man, whose fame filled the whole world, lie for ten years after his death without an inscription or a name. He had, however, directed *that* divine and immortal achievement of his life to be recorded upon his tomb in the following lines:

> Here Rufus lies, who Vindex's arms* withstood,
> Not for himself, but for his country's good.

But a faithful friend is so rarely to be found, and the dead are so soon forgotten, that we shall be under the necessity of erecting our own sepulchres, and anticipate the office of our heirs. For who has not reason to fear, that what has happened to Virginius, may be his own case? an indignity which is of so much the more public notoriety, as it falls upon a man of his illustrious virtues.

LETTER XI.

TO MAXIMUS.

HOW happy a day did I lately pass! when, having been called by the prefect† of Rome to his assistance in a certain cause, I had the pleasure to

* See p. 63. note.

† An officer somewhat in the nature of the lord-mayor among us. He preceded all other city magistrates; having power to receive appeals from the inferior courts, and to decide almost all causes within the limits of Rome, or a hundred miles round.

hear Fuscus Salinator, and Numidius Quadratus, plead on opposite sides. They are both of them young men of extraordinary hopes, and possess talents which will one day, I am persuaded, render them an ornament not only to the present age, but to literature itself. They discovered, in the course of his trial, that they were actuated by principles of strict probity, and inflexible courage; and I had great satisfaction in remarking, that their garb* was decent, their elocution distinct, their voice manly, their memory strong,† and that their ele-

* See Letter 3. Book II. note.

† Strength of memory seems to have been a quality in singular esteem among the Romans; Pliny often mentioning it, when he draws the characters of his friends, as in the number of their most shining talents. Quinctilian considers it as the measure of genius: "*Tantum ingenii*," says he, "*quantum memoriæ*." The extraordinary perfection in which some of the ancients are said to have possessed this important faculty, is almost incredible. Our author speaks, in a former letter, of a Greek philosopher of his acquaintance, who, after having delivered a long harangue extempore, would immediately repeat it again, without losing a single word. Seneca says, he could, in his youth, repeat two thousand names, exactly in the same order they were read to him; and that, to try the strength of his memory, the audience who attended the same professor with himself, would each of them give him a verse, which he would instantly repeat, beginning with the last, and so on to the first, to the amount of two hundred. He tells a pleasant story upon this occasion, of a certain poet, who having recited a poem in public, a person who was present claimed it for his own, and, in proof of its being so, immediately repeated it word for word, which the real author was not capable of doing.—*Sen. Controv.* lib. 1. *sub. init.* Numberless instances might be collected from the ancients to the same purpose. To mention only a few more: it is said of Themistocles, that he made himself master of the Persian language in a year's time; of Mithridates, that he understood as many languages as he commanded nations, that is, no less than twenty-

vated genius was guided by an equal solidity of judgment. To this I will add, that I took singular pleasure in observing, that while they looked upon me as their guide and model, they appeared, in the opinion of the audience, as my imitators and rivals. It was a day (I cannot but repeat it again) which afforded me the most exquisite happiness, and which I shall ever mark with the fairest white.* What, indeed, could be either more delightful to me on the public account, than to see two such noble youths building their fame and glory upon the polite arts; or more desirable upon my own, than to be marked out as a worthy example to them in their pursuits of virtue? May the gods still grant me the continuance of that pleasure! And may every man, who thinks me deserving of his imitation, far exceed the model he has chosen! Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO FABATUS.†

MOST certainly you ought to have no reserve in recommending to me such persons whom

two; of Cyrus, that he retained the names of every single soldier in his army.—*Quint.* l. 11. 2. But the finest compliment that ever was paid to a good memory, is what Tully says of Julius Cæsar, in his oration for Ligarius, that "he never forgot any thing but an injury."

* Alluding to a custom of the Romans, who marked the fortunate days in their calendar with *white*, and the unfortunate with *black*.

† His wife Calphurnia's grandfather.

you judge worthy of your patronage; for nothing is more agreeable to your character, than to be as extensively beneficial as possible; nor to mine, than to interest myself in every thing in which you are concerned. Be assured, therefore, I shall give all the assistance in my power to Vectius Priscus, especially in what relates to my peculiar province,—I mean the centumviral court.

You desire me to forget those letters which you wrote to me, you say, in the openness of your heart; but, believe me, there is none I remember with more satisfaction. They are very pleasing proofs of the share I enjoy of your affection, since you use the same free expostulations with me, that you would with your own son. And, to confess the truth, they are so much the more agreeable, as I had nothing to accuse myself of upon your account; for I had very exactly performed your requests. I entreat you, again and again, still to rebuke me with the same freedom, whenever you imagine (and, I trust, it will be only imagination) that I fail in my good offices towards you; it will afford *me* the pleasure of receiving a strong mark of your affectionate regard; and *you*, that of being convinced I did not deserve the reproach. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO URSUS.

WAS ever man so vexed and oppressed as my friend Varenus, who has been obliged to enter into a fresh defence, and, as it were, to petition

again for what he had, with much difficulty and contention, already obtained?* The Bithynians have had the confidence, not only to complain to the consuls of the decree of the senate, but also to inveigh against it to the emperor, who happened to be absent when it passed. Cæsar† referred them again to the senate, where they still persisted in their remonstrances. Claudius Capito ventured to be counsel for them; and I will add, with more irreverence than true courage, as he undertook to arraign the justice of a decree of the senate, in the face of that august assembly. Fronto Catius replied to him with great force and spirit; as, indeed, the whole body of the senate conducted themselves in this affair with wonderful dignity: for even those who opposed the petition of Varenus, when it was first brought before the house, thought that, after it had been granted, it ought not to be reversed. While the question, indeed, was under debate, they justly supposed, that every member was at liberty to give his sentiments; but when once determined by the majority, they looked upon it to be then the common concern of each senator to support. This was the general opinion of the whole house, Acilius Rufus only excepted, and seven or eight more, who persevered in their former vote; in which small party there were some, whose occasional solemnity, or rather affectation of solemnity, appeared extremely ridiculous. You will judge, from hence, what a warm battle we are likely to have, since this prelude, as I may call it, has occasioned so much contention. Farewell.

* See Book V. Letter 20. † Trajan.

LETTER XIV.

TO MAURICUS.

IN compliance with your earnest invitation, I consent to make you a visit at your Formian villa, but upon condition that you put yourself to no inconvenience upon my account; a condition which I shall also strictly observe on my part. It is not the pleasures of your sea and your coast, it is your company, it is retirement, it is freedom, that I desire to enjoy: otherwise, I might as well remain in Rome; for there is no medium worth accepting, between giving up one's time wholly to the disposal of others, or reserving it entirely in one's own power; at least, for myself, I declare I can relish no mixtures of any kind. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO ROMANUS.

I BELIEVE you were not present at a very droll circumstance which lately happened. I was not, indeed, a witness to it myself; however, I had an early account of what passed. Passienus Paulus, an eminent Roman knight, and particularly conspicuous for his literary abilities, has a genius for elegiac poetry; a talent which runs in the family, for Propertius was his relation as well as his countryman. He was lately reciting a poem which opened thus:

Priscus, at thy command ——

Whereupon Priscus, who happened to be present as a particular friend of the poet's, cried out, "But he is mistaken, I did not command him." Think what a roar of laughter this occasioned. The intellects of Priscus, you must know, are thought to be somewhat disordered; however, as he enters into the common offices of life, is called to consultations, and publicly acts as a lawyer, this behaviour was the more remarkable and ridiculous; and, in fact, Paulus was a good deal disconcerted by his friend's absurdity. You see it is necessary for those who are solicitous to recite their works in public, to take care that the audience, as well as the author, should be of sound intellects. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO TACITUS.

YOUR request, that I would send you an account of my uncle's death, in order to transmit a more exact relation of it to posterity, merits my acknowledgments; for, if the glorious circumstances which occasioned this accident shall be celebrated by your pen, the manner of his exit will be rendered for ever illustrious. Notwithstanding he perished by a misfortune, which, as it involved at the same time a most beautiful country in ruins, and destroyed so many populous cities, seems to promise him an everlasting remembrance; notwithstanding he has himself composed many works which will descend to the latest times; yet, I am persuaded, the mentioning of him in your immortal writings will great-

ly contribute to eternize his name. Happy I deem those to be, whom the gods have distinguished with the abilities either of performing such actions as are worthy of being related, or of relating them in a manner worthy of being read; but doubly happy are they, who are blessed with both these uncommon endowments; and in that number my uncle, as his own writings and your history will prove, may justly be ranked. It is with extreme willingness, therefore, I execute your commands; and I should, indeed, have claimed the task if you had not enjoined it. He was, at that time, with the fleet under his command, at Misenum.* On the 24th of August, about one in the afternoon, my mother desired him to observe a cloud which appeared of a very unusual size and shape. He had just returned from enjoying the benefit of the sun, and, after bathing in cold water, and taking a slight repast, was retired to his study; he immediately arose, and went out upon an eminence, from whence he might more distinctly view this very singular phenomenon. It was not at that distance discernible from what mountain this cloud issued, but it was found afterwards to proceed from Vesuvius.†

* In the gulf of Naples.

† About six miles distant from Naples. This dreadful eruption happened A. D. 79, in the first year of the emperor Titus. Martial has a pretty epigram upon this subject, in which he gives us a view of Vesuvius, as it appeared before this terrible conflagration broke out:

Hic est pampineis viridis Vesuvius umbris,
Presserat hic madidos nobilis uva lacus.
Hæc juga, quàm Nisæ colles, plus Bacchus amavit;
Hoc nuper Satyri monte dedêre choros.

I cannot give you a more exact description of its figure, than by resembling it to that of a pine-tree; for it shot up a great height in the form of a tall trunk, which spread at the top into a sort of branches; occasioned, I suppose, either that the force of the internal vapour which impelled the cloud upwards, decreased in strength as it advanced, or that the cloud, being pressed back by its own weight, expanded itself in the manner I have mentioned; it appeared sometimes bright, and sometimes dark and spotted, as it was either more or less impregnated with earth and cinders. This uncommon appearance excited my uncle's philosophical curiosity to take a nearer view of it. He accordingly ordered a light vessel to be prepared, and offered me the liberty, if I thought proper, to attend him. I rather chose to continue the employment in which I was engaged; for, it happened, that he

Hæc Veneris sedes, Lacedæmone gratior illi;
Hic locus Herculeo nomine clarus erat;
Cuncta jacent flammis, et tristi mersa favilla;
Nec vellent superi hoc licuisse sibi.

Lib. IV. Ep. 44.

Here verdant vines o'erspread Vesuvio's sides;
The generous grape *here* poured her purple tides.
This Bacchus loved beyond his native scene;
Here dancing satyrs joyed to trip the green.
Far more than Sparta *this* in Venus' grace;
And great Alcides once renowned the place.—
Now flaming embers spread dire waste around,
And Gods regret that Gods can thus confound.

It seems probable, that this was the first eruption of mount Vesuvius, at least of any consequence; as it is certain we have no particular accounts of any peceding one. Dio, indeed, and other ancient authors, speak of a prior eruption; but still they describe it as covered with trees and vines, so that the foregoing must have been inconsiderable.

had given me a certain writing to copy.* As he was going out of the house with his tablets in his hand, he was met by the mariners belonging to the gallies stationed at Retina, from which they had fled in the utmost terror; for that port being situated at the foot of Vesuvius, they had no other way to escape than by sea. They conjured him, therefore, not to proceed and expose his life to imminent and inevitable danger. In compliance with their advice, he changed his original intention, and, instead of gratifying his philosophical spirit, he resigned it to the more magnanimous principle of aiding the distressed. With this view, he ordered the fleet immediately to put to sea, and went himself on board with an intention of assisting not only Retina, but the several other towns which stood thick upon that beautiful coast. Hastening to the place, therefore, from whence others fled with the utmost terror, he steered his direct course to the point of danger, and with so much calmness and presence of mind, as to be able to make and dictate his observations upon the appearance and progress of that dreadful scene. He was now so near the mountain, that the cinders, which grew thicker and hotter the more he advanced, fell into the ships, together with pumice-stones, and black pieces of burning rock; they were likewise in danger, not only of being a-ground by the sudden retreat of the sea,

* The manuscript and printed copies vary extremely from each other as to the reading of this passage. The conjecture of Cortes seems the most satisfactory, as it comes nearest the most approved manuscripts, and best falls in with the context; it is therefore adopted in the translation.

but also from the vast fragments which rolled down from the mountains, and obstructed all the shore. Here he stopped, to consider whether he should return back; to which the pilot advising him, "Fortune," said he, "befriends the brave; steer to Pomponianus." Pomponianus was then at Stabiæ,* separated by a gulf, which the sea, after several insensible windings, forms upon that shore. Pomponianus had already sent his baggage on board; for though he was not at that time in actual danger, yet, being within the view of it, and, indeed, extremely near, he was determined, if it should in the least increase, to put to sea as soon as the wind should change. It was favourable, however, for carrying my uncle to Pomponianus, whom he found in the greatest consternation; and embracing him with tenderness, he encouraged and exhorted him to keep up his spirits. The more to dissipate his fears, he ordered his servants, with an air of unconcern, to carry him to the baths; and, after having bathed, he sat down to supper with great, or at least (what is equally heroic) with all the appearance of cheerfulness. In the mean while, the fire from Vesuvius flamed forth from several parts of the mountain with great violence; which the darkness of the night contributed to render still more visible and dreadful. But my uncle, in order to calm the apprehensions of his friend, assured him it was only the conflagration of the villages, which the country people had abandoned. After this he retired to rest, and it is most certain, he was so little discomposed as to fall into a deep sleep; for, being corpu-

* Now called *Castel è Mar di Stabia*, in the gulf of Naples.

lent, and breathing hard, the attendants in the antichamber actually heard him snore. The court which led to his apartment being now almost filled with stones and ashes, it would have been impossible for him, if he had continued there any longer, to have made his way out; it was thought proper, therefore, to awaken him. He got up, and joined Pomponianus, and the rest of the company, who had not been sufficiently unconcerned to think of going to bed. They consulted together whether it would be most prudent to trust to the houses, which now shook from side to side with frequent and violent concussions, or flee to the open fields, where the calcined stones and cinders, though levigated indeed, yet fell in large showers, and threatened them with instant destruction. In this distress, they resolved for the fields, as the less dangerous situation of the two; a resolution which, while the rest of the company were hurried into by their fears, my uncle embraced upon cool and deliberate consideration. They went out, then, having pillows tied upon their heads with napkins; and this was their whole defence against the storm of stones that fell around them. It was now day every where else, but *there* a deeper darkness prevailed than in the blackest night; which, however, was in some degree dissipated by torches and other lights of various kinds. They thought it expedient to go down farther upon the shore, in order to observe if they might safely put out to sea; but they found the waves still running extremely high and boisterous. There my uncle, having drunk a draught or two of cold water, laid himself down upon a sail-cloth which was spread

for him; when immediately the flames, preceded by a strong smell of sulphur, dispersed the rest of the company, and obliged him to rise. He raised himself up, with the assistance of two of his servants, and instantly fell down dead; suffocated, I conjecture, by some gross and noxious vapour, as having always had weak lungs, and being frequently subject to a difficulty of breathing. As soon as it was light again, which was not till the third day after this melancholy accident, his body was found entire, and without any marks of violence, exactly in the same posture in which he fell, and looking more like a man asleep than dead. During all this time, my mother and I, who were at Misenum——* But as this has no connection with your history, so your enquiry went no farther than concerning my uncle's death; with that, therefore, I will put an end to my letter. Suffer me only to add, that I have faithfully related to you what I was either an eye-witness of myself, or received immediately after the accident happened, and before there was time to vary the truth. You will choose out of this narrative such circumstance as shall be most suitable to your purpose; for there is a great difference between writing a letter, and composing a history; between addressing a friend, and addressing the public. Farewell.

* See this account continued, Letter 20. of this Book.

LETTER XVII.

TO RESTITUTUS.

I CANNOT forbear venting my displeasure before you in a letter, since I have no opportunity of doing so in person, against a certain behaviour which gave me some offence in an assembly where I was lately present. The company was entertained with a recital of a very finished performance; but there were two or three persons among the audience, men of great genius in their own, and a few of their friends' estimation, who sate like so many deaf and dumb mutes, without moving a lip or a hand, or once rising from their seats, even to shift their posture. But to what purpose, in the name of good sense, all this wondrous air of wisdom and solemnity, or rather, indeed, (to give it its true appellation,) of this fastidious gravity? Is it not downright folly, or even madness, thus to lose a whole day merely to commit a piece of rudeness, and leave *him* an enemy, whom you visited as a *friend?* Is a man conscious that he possesses a superior power of eloquence than the person whom he attends on such an occasion? so much the rather ought he to guard against every appearance of envy, as a passion that always implies a mortifying sense of inferiority. But, whatever a man's talent may be, whether greater, or equal, or less than his friend's, still it is his interest to give him the approbation he deserves; if greater, or equal, because the higher his glory rises whom you equal or excel, the more considerable yours

must necessarily be; if less, because if one of more exalted abilities does not meet with applause, neither possibly can you. For my own part, I respect and honour all who discover any degree of merit in the difficult and laborious art of oratory; for eloquence is a high and haughty dame, who scorns to reside with those that despise her. But perhaps you are not of this opinion! yet who more reveres this glorious talent, or is a more candid judge of it, than yourself? In confidence of which, I have ventured to declare to you the late indignation I felt, as not doubting you would have joined with me in the same sentiments. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO SABINUS.

I WILL endeavour, as you desire, to undertake the cause of the Firmiani,* though I have at present many affairs upon my hands; for I should be extremely glad to oblige so illustrious a colony by my good offices, as well as to render you an acceptable service. How, indeed, can I refuse any thing to you, who profess to have sought my friendship as your support and ornament; especially when your request is on behalf of your country? For what can be more honourable than the entreaties of a patriot, or more efficacious than those of a friend? You may engage for me, therefore, to your, or rather, as I should now call them, *our* friends the Fir-

* Inhabitants of a city in Italy called *Firmo*, in the marquisite of Ancona.

miani. And though their own illustrious character did nor persuade me that they deserve my care and patronage, yet I could not but conceive a very high opinion of their merit, from seeing a man of your distinguished virtues choose to reside among them.

LETTER XIX.

TO NEPOS.

ARE you informed, that the price of lands is considerably risen; especially of those which lie about Rome? This sudden advance was occasioned by a practice which has been much complained of, and which drew from the senate, at the last assembly for the election of magistrates, a very laudable decree, whereby the candidates are prohibited from giving the electors any treat, present, or money whatsoever. The two former of these abuses were practised with as little reserve as discretion; the latter, though carried on with more secrecy, was, however, equally notorious. Our friend Homulus, taking advantage of this favourable disposition of the senate, instead of delivering his sentiments upon the point in debate, moved, that the consuls should acquaint the emperor, that it was the unanimous desire of the house to have this abuse reformed, and address him to interpose his vigilance and authority for the removal of this grievance, as he already had of every other. The emperor was accordingly pleased to comply, and published an edict to restrain those infamous largesses; directing, that no person shall be admitted as a candidate who has

not a third part of his estate in land; deeming it highly indecent, (as no doubt it is,) that those who aspire to dignities in the state, should look upon Rome and Italy rather like travellers who are passing through it, than as their proper country, and in which the principal part of their possessions lay. This edict has occasioned a general struggle among those who aim at any office, to buy up every thing which they hear is to be sold; by which means the value of lands is greatly increased. If, therefore, you are inclined to dispose of any part of your estate here, or of making purchases elsewhere, you have now a good opportunity; for, in order to buy in Italy, these candidates are obliged to sell their estates in the provinces. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO CORNELIUS TACITUS.

THE letter which, in compliance with your request, I wrote to you, concerning the death of my uncle, has raised, it seems, your curiosity to know what terrors and dangers attended me while I continued at Misenum; for there, I think, the account in my former broke off:

Though my shocked soul recoils, my tongue shall tell.*

My uncle having left us, I continued the employment which prevented my going with him, till it was time to bathe; after which I went to supper, and then fell into a short and unquiet sleep. There

* Virgil. Pitt's Translation.

had been, during many days before, some shocks of an earthquake, which the less alarmed us as they are frequent in Campania; but they were so particularly violent that night, that they not only shook every thing about us, but seemed, indeed, to threaten total destruction. My mother flew to my chamber, where she found me rising in order to awaken her. We went out into a small court belonging to the house, which separated the sea from the buildings. As I was at that time but eighteen years of age, I know not whether I should call my behaviour, in this perilous conjuncture, courage or rashness; but I took up Livy, and amused myself with turning over that author, and even making extracts from him, as if I had been perfectly at my ease. While we were in this situation, a friend of my uncle's, who was just come from Spain to pay him a visit, joined us, and observing me sitting by my mother with a book in my hand, reproved her patience, and my security; nevertheless, I still went on with my author. It was now morning, but the light was exceedingly faint and languid; the buildings all around us tottered, and, though we stood upon open ground, yet, as the place was narrow and confined, there was no remaining without imminent danger; we therefore resolved to leave the town. The people followed us in the utmost consternation, and (as to a mind distracted with terror, every suggestion seems more prudent than its own) pressed in great crowds about us in our way out. Being advanced at a convenient distance from the houses, we stood still, in the midst of a most hazardous and tremendous scene. The chariots which we had or-

dered to be drawn out, were so agitated backwards and forwards, though upon the most level ground, that we could not keep them steady, even by supporting them with large stones. The sea seemed to roll back upon itself, and to be driven from its banks by the convulsive motion of the earth; it is certain, at least, the shore was considerably enlarged, and several sea-animals were left upon it. On the other side a black and dreadful cloud bursting with an igneous serpentine vapour, darted out a long train of fire, resembling flashes of lightning, but much larger. Upon this, our Spanish friend, whom I mentioned above, addressing himself to my mother and me, with great warmth and earnestness: "If your brother and your uncle," said he, "is safe, he certainly wishes you may be so too; but if he perished, it was his desire, no doubt, that you might both survive him: why, therefore, do you delay your escape a moment?" We could never think of our own safety, we replied, while we were uncertain of his; upon which our friend left us, and withdrew from the danger with the utmost precipitation. Soon afterwards, the cloud seemed to descend, and cover the whole ocean; as, indeed, it entirely hid the island of Caprea,* and the promontory of Misenum. My mother conjured me to make my escape at any rate, which, as I was young, I might easily effect; as for herself, she said, her age and corpulency rendered all attempts of that sort impossible; however she would willingly meet death, if she could have the satisfaction of seeing

* An island near Naples, now called *Capri*.

that she was not the occasion of mine. But I absolutely refused to leave her, and, taking her by the hand, I led her on; she complied with great reluctance, and not without many reproaches to herself for being the occasion of retarding my flight. The ashes now began to fall upon us, though in no great quantity. I turned my head, and observed behind us a thick smoke, which came rolling after us like a torrent. I proposed, while we had yet any light, to turn out of the high road, lest she should be pressed to death in the dark, by the crowd that followed us. We had scarcely stepped out of the path, when darkness overspread us, not like that of a cloudy night, or when there is no moon, but of a room when it is shut up, and all the lights extinct. Nothing, then, was to be heard but the shrieks of women, the screams of children, and the cries of men; some calling for their children, others for their parents, others for their husbands, and only distinguishing each other by their voices; one lamenting his own fate, another that of his family; some wishing to die, from the very fear of dying; some lifting their hands to the gods; but the greater part imagining that the last and eternal night was come, which was to destroy both the gods* and the world together. Among these there were some who augmented the real terrors by imaginary ones, and made the frighted multitude falsely believe that Misenum was actually in flames. At length, a

* The Stoic and Epicurean philosophers held, that the world was to be destroyed by fire, and all things fall again into original chaos; not excepting even the national gods themselves from the destruction of this general conflagration.

glimmering light appeared, which we imagined to be rather the forerunner of an approaching burst of flames, (as in fact it was,) than the return of day; however, the fire fell at a distance from us: then again we were immersed in thick darkness, and a heavy shower of ashes rained upon us, which we were obliged every now and then to shake off, otherwise we should have been overwhelmed and buried in the heap. I might boast, that, during all this scene of horror, not a sigh, or expression of fear, escaped from me, had not my support been founded on that miserable, though strong, consolation, that all mankind were involved in the same calamity, and that I imagined I was perishing with the world itself. At last, this terrible darkness was dissipated by degrees, like a cloud, or smoke; the real day returned, and even the sun appeared, though very faintly, and as when an eclipse is coming on. Every object that presented itself to our eyes (which were extremely weakened) seemed changed, being covered with white ashes,* as with a deep snow. We returned to Misenum, where we refreshed ourselves as well as we could, and passed an anxious night between hope and fear; though, indeed, with a much larger share of the latter; for the earth still continued to shake, while several enthusiastic persons ran wildly among the people, throwing out terrifying predictions, and making a kind of frantic sport of their own and their friends'

* Mr. Addison, in his account of Mount Vesuvio, observes, that the air of the place is so very much impregnated with saltpetre, that one can scaree find a stone which has not the top white with it.—*Travels*, 182.

wretched situation. However, my mother and I, notwithstanding the danger we had passed, and that which still threatened us, had no intention of leaving Misenum, till we should receive some account of my uncle.——

And now, you will read this narrative without any view of inserting it in your history, of which it is by no means worthy; and, indeed, you must impute it to your own request, if it should appear not to deserve even the trouble of a letter. Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO CANINIUS.

THOUGH I am an admirer of the ancients, yet I am far from despising, as some affect, the genius of the moderns; nor can I suppose that nature, in these latter ages, is so worn out, as to be incapable of any valuable production. On the contrary, I have lately had the pleasure of hearing Virginius Romanus read, to a few select friends, a comedy so happily formed in the spirit of the ancients, that it may hereafter be considered as a model. I know not whether the author is in the number of your acquaintance; I am sure, at least, he ought to be, as he is greatly distinguished by the probity of his manners, the elegance of his genius, and the variety of his compositions. He has written some very agreeable pieces, of the burlesque kind, in Iambics, with much delicacy, wit, and humour, and I will add, too, even eloquence; for every species of composition, which is perfect in its kind, may, with

propriety, be termed eloquent. He has also published some comedies after the manner of Menander, and other approved authors of that age, which deserve to be ranked with those of Plautus and Terence. He has now, for the first time, attempted the ancient comedy,* but in such a manner as to show, he is a perfect master in this way. Strength and majesty, delicacy and softness, elegance and wit, are the distinguishing graces of this performance. He places virtuous characters in the most amiable point of view, and exposes vicious ones with the warmest indignation; whenever he makes use of feigned names, it is with great propriety, as he employs real ones with equal justness. In respect only to myself, I should say he has erred through an excess of friendship, if I did not know that fiction is the privilege of poets. In a word, I will insist upon his letting me have the copy, that I may send it to you for your perusal, or rather that you may get it by heart; for I am well persuaded, when you have once taken it up, you will not easily lay it down. Farewell.

* With regard to the various changes and revolutions which the Grecian comedy had undergone, it was distinguished into three kinds, viz. the *ancient*, which was founded upon real facts, and persons pointed out by their proper names; the *middle*, where the subject was real, but the names fictitious; the *new*, wherein both the names and the action are imaginary. Of the *first* model was Aristophanes; upon whose general manner, it is probable, Romanus formed his comedy here mentioned; but, as he appears to have introduced both true and invented names in the drama in question, it seems to have been of the *mixed* kind.

LETTER XXII.

TO TYRO.

AN affair has lately been transacted here, which nearly concerns those who shall hereafter be appointed governors of provinces, as well as every man who too incautiously trusts his friends. Lustricus Bruttianus, having detected his lieutenant, Montanus Atticinus, in several flagrant delinquencies, accused him to the emperor. Atticinus, on the other hand, added to his guilt, by instituting a groundless prosecution against the friend whose confidence he had abused. A hearing was appointed, and I was elected one of the assessors at his trial. Both parties pleaded their own cause, and, in a summary way, confined themselves strictly to the articles of the charge; a method by much the shortest of discovering the truth. Bruttianus, as a proof of the unreserved confidence he had reposed in his friend, and that nothing but absolute necessity could have extorted from him this complaint, produced his will, written by the hand of Atticinus. He then proceeded to open the charge, and clearly proved him guilty of the most infamous conduct. Atticinus, after some vain efforts to justify himself, withdrew; but his defence appeared as weak as his accusation was wicked. It was proved, that he had bribed a slave belonging to the secretary of Bruttianus, and, by that means, got into his possession his register-book, which he erased, and then made this his villanous act the foundation of a charge

against his friend. The emperor's conduct in this trial was extremely noble. Without collecting the voices with respect to Bruttianus, he proceeded immediately to take them only in relation to Atticinus, who was, accordingly, condemned to banishment. Bruttianus was acquitted not only with a very full and honourable testimony of his integrity, but with the credit of having behaved in this affair with great firmness. And, indeed, after having vindicated his own character in few words, he supported his charge against Atticinus with much spirit; and approved himself no less a man of fortitude than of honesty. I send you this account not only as a caution for your behaviour in the government you have obtained, and as a hint to depend upon yourself as much as possible, without relying too far upon your friends; but that you may be assured, if you should happen to be imposed upon in the execution of your office, (which heaven avert!) you will readily meet with justice here. However, that you may stand in no need of it, let me entreat you to exert the utmost circumspection and vigilance; for the satisfaction of being redressed, cannot compensate the mortification of having been deceived. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII.

TO TRIARIUS.

I CONSENT to undertake the cause which you so earnestly recommend to me; but glorious and honourable as it may be, I will not be your coun-

sel without a fee. Is it possible, you will say, that my friend Pliny should be so mercenary? It is; and I insist upon a reward which will do me more honour than the most disinterested patronage. I request you then, and, indeed, I make it a previous condition, that Cremutius Ruso may be joined with me as counsel in this cause. This is a practice which I have frequently observed with respect to several distinguished youths; as I take infinite pleasure in presenting young men of merit to the bar, and introducing them to the notice of fame. But if ever I owed this good office to any man, it is certainly to Ruso, not only upon account of his family, but his warm affection to me; and it would afford me a very singular satisfaction to have an opportunity of seeing him draw the attention of the audience in the same court, and the same cause, with myself This I now ask as an obligation to me; but when he has pleaded in your cause, you will esteem it as a favour done to you; for I will be answerable, that he shall acquit himself in a manner equal to your wishes, as well as to my hopes, and the importance of the trial. He is a youth of a most excellent disposition; and when once I shall have produced his merit to public observation, we shall soon see him exert the same generous office in bringing forward the talents of others; as, indeed, no man, without the support and encouragement of friends, and having proper opportunities thrown in his way, is able to rise at once from obscurity by the force of his own unassisted genius.

LETTER XXIV.

TO MACER.

HOW much does the fame of human actions depend upon the station of those who perform them! The very same conduct shall be either greatly magnified, or entirely overlooked, as it happens to proceed from a person of conspicuous or obscure rank. I was sailing lately upon our lake,* with an old man of my acquaintance, who desired me to observe a villa situated upon its banks, which had a chamber hanging over the water. "From that room," said he, "a woman of our city threw herself and her husband." Upon enquiring into the cause, he informed me, that her husband having been long afflicted with an ulcer in those parts which modesty conceals, she prevailed with him at last to let her inspect the sore, assuring him, at the same time, that she would most sincerely give him her opinion, whether there was a possibility of its being cured. Accordingly, upon viewing the ulcer, she found there were no hopes, and, therefore, advised him to put an end to his life; to which she not only encouraged him by her example, but was actually the means of his death; for, tying herself to her husband, she plunged with him into the lake. Though this happened in the very city where I was born, I never heard it mentioned before; and yet that this action is less taken notice of than that famous one of Arria's,† is not because it was less remarkable,

* The lake Larius.

† See an account of her, Book III. Letter 16.

but because the person who performed it was of inferior rank. Farewell.

LETTER XXV.

TO HISPANUS.

YOU inform me, that Robustus, a Roman knight of great distinction, accompanied my friend Attilius Scaurus as far as Ocriculum,* but has never been heard of since. In compliance, therefore, with your desire, I shall send for Scaurus, in order to see if he can give us any light in tracing him; though I fear, indeed, it will be to no purpose. I suspect an accident of the same unaccountable kind has attended Robustus, as formerly happened to my townsman, Metilius Crispus. I procured a *company* for him in the army, and gave him, when he set out, 40,000 sestercest for his equipage; but I never received any letter from him afterwards, or could learn what became of him. Whether he was murdered by his servants, or together with them, is uncertain; however, neither he nor they ever appeared more. I wish we may not find it thus with respect to Robustus; nevertheless, I will send for Scaurus. I cannot refuse this office either to your generous request, or the very laudable entreaties of that most excellent youth his son, who discovers as much good sense in the method, as he does filial affection in the zeal of his enquiry; and may we

* Now Otricoli, in Ombria, or the duchy of Spoleto.

† About L. 320. Some editions read it, 400,000 sesterces, which is about L. 3200 of our money.

have the same success in finding his father, as he has had in discovering the person that accompanied him! Farewell.

LETTER XXVI.

TO SERVIANUS.

I AM extremely rejoiced to hear that you design your daughter for Fuscus Salinator, and congratulate you upon it. His family is patrician,* and both his father and mother are persons of the most exalted merit. As for himself, he is studious, learned, and eloquent, and with all the innocence of a child, unites the sprightliness of youth to the wisdom of age. I am not, believe me, deceived by my affection, when I give him this character; for though I love him beyond measure, (as his kind offices and regard to me well deserve,) yet partiality has no share in my judgment; on the contrary, the stronger my affection for him is, the more rigorously I weigh his merit. I will venture, then, to assure you, (and I speak it upon my own experience,) you could not have wished for a more accomplished son-in-law. May he soon present you with a grandson, who shall be the exact copy of his father! and with what pleasure shall I receive from the arms of two such friends, their children or grand-children, whom I shall claim a sort of right to embrace as my own! Farewell.

* Those families were styled patrician, whose ancestors had been members of the senate, in the earliest times of the regal or consular government.

LETTER XXVII.

TO SEVERUS.

YOU desire me to consider what turn you should give to your speech in honour of the emperor, upon your being appointed consul elect.* It is much easier, amidst that variety of topics which the virtues of this illustrious prince† abundantly supply, to find materials for encomium, than to select them. However, I will send you my opinion, or (what I rather choose) I will give them to you in person, after having laid before you the difficulties which occur to me. I am doubtful, then, whether I should advise you to pursue the method which I observed myself on the same occasion. When I was cousul elect, I avoided running into the usual strain of compliment, which how far soever (as far certainly it would have been) from adulation, might yet bear the semblance of it. Not that I affected an uncommon spirit of freedom, but as well knowing the sentiments of our amiable prince, and being thoroughly persuaded, that the highest eulogy I could offer to him, would be to show the world I was under no necessity of paying him any. When I reflected what unbounded praises had been heaped upon the very worst of his predecessors, nothing, I was persuaded,

* The consuls, though they were chosen in August, did not enter upon their office till the first of January, during which interval they were styled *consules designati*, consuls elect. It was usual for them upon that occasion to compliment the emperor, by whose appointment, after the dissolution of the republican government, they were chosen.

† Trajan.

could more distinguish a prince of his real virtues, from those infamous emperors, than to address him in a different manner. And this I thought proper to observe in my speech, lest it might be suspected I passed over his glorious acts, not out of judgment, but inattention. Such was the method I then observed; but I am sensible, that the same measures are neither agreeable, nor, indeed, expedient to every man alike. Besides, the propriety of a certain mode of acting depends not only upon persons, but time and circumstances; and as the late enterprise of our illustrious prince affords materials for panegyric, no less just than recent and *glorious*, I doubt (as I said before) whether I should persuade you, in the present instance, to adopt the same plan as I did myself. In this, however, I am clear, that it is proper to offer it to your consideration. Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO QUADRATUS.

I WAS not ignorant of the reason which prevented your coming into Campania to receive me. But, absent as you were, might I have judged by the vast quantity of provisions of all sorts, with which I was supplied by your orders, I should have imagined you had conveyed yourself hither with your whole magazine of good fare. I must own I was so arrant a clown, as to take all that was offered me; however, it was in compliance with the solicitations of your people, and fearing you would chide both them and me, if I refused. But, for the future, if

you will not observe some measure, *I* must. And accordingly I assured your servants, if ever they brought me such profusion again, I would absolutely return the whole. You will tell me, I know, that I should consider every thing belonging to you as mine. I am sensible that I ought; and, therefore, I would use them with the same moderation as my own. Farewell.

LETTER XXIX.

TO QUADRATUS.

AVIDIUS QUIETUS, whose affection, and (which I equally valued) whose approbation I had the happiness to enjoy, used frequently to cite this maxim, among many others of his friend Thrasea's: *That* there are three sorts of causes which it becomes a man of honour to undertake; those of our friends, those of persons who are destitute of any other advocate to plead their claim, and those which relate to public example. Why we should engage in the cause of our friends, requires no explanation; but to defend the destitute, shows both a firm and humane heart; as to rise in causes of the exemplary kind, is a proof of being actuated by a principle of patriotism; nothing being of more consequence to society, than whether a good or an evil precedent prevails. To these causes I will add (perhaps in the spirit of ambition, however I will venture to add) *those* also of a public nature, which are rendered conspicuous by the splendid rank of the person arraigned; for it is reasonable, no doubt, that the honour which is derived to the orator's own reputation,

by appearing as an advocate in impeachments of that kind, should sometimes enter into his motives for vindicating the conduct of an illustrious client. These are the limits (since you require my sentiments) which I would prescribe to a young man of your respectable station and modest virtues.

For the rest, practice, I know, is generally deemed, and in fact is, the best master in the art of pleading; and I have seen many, who, with moderate parts, and no literature, have, by that single advantage, made a good figure. Nevertheless, the observation of Pollio (or, at least, what I have been told was his) is certainly true, as I know by experience: "By being an able advocate," said he, "*I obtained* much practice; as, on the other hand, much practice rendered me a less able advocate." The reason is, that a talent for oratory, by being too repeatedly exercised, sinks into a mere mechanical habit; and the frequent pleader, instead of a just confidence, is apt to fall into a careless reliance upon the strength of his powers. Nor is the being accustomed to public speaking, a circumstance absolutely necessary, in order to acquire a reputation of eloquence; the great modesty of Isocrates, which, together with the weakness of his voice, prevented him from appearing at the bar, did not obstruct his attaining the character of a consummate orator.

Let me farther recommend it to you, to read and compose, and meditate much, that you may always possess a fund of suitable matter, when you choose to appear as an advocate in the courts of justice; and it never will be your choice, I am well persuaded, but when it becomes you to act in that

character; a restriction which I have always laid down to myself. I must confess, however, that I have been concerned in some causes, not so much from choice as necessity; but to comply with necessity, is in some degree, to comply with reason. The fact is, I have occasionally been appointed counsel by the senate; however, it was in causes which fell within Thrasea's third rule, that is, of the exemplary kind. I was advocate for the province of Bœtica, against Bæbius Massa; where the question being, whether the impeachment should be received? it passed in the affirmative. I appeared for them a second time against Cæcilius Classicus; and the point in debate was, whether the provincial officers, who acted under him in his proconsulship, should be deemed accomplices? It was determined they should; and they were punished accordingly. I was counsel against Marius Priscus, who having been convicted of bribery, endeavoured to take advantage of the lenity of the law in that case, the penalty of which was by no means adequate to his enormous guilt; but he was sentenced to banishment. I defended Julius Bassus in an affair in which he had acted imprudently, 'tis true, but not in the least with any ill intention; the matter was referred to the ordinary judges, and he was permitted, in the mean while, to retain his seat in the senate. I pleaded, likewise, not long since, on behalf of Varenus, who petitioned for leave to produce witnesses also on his part; which was granted him. And now I will only wish, that I may, for the future, be enjoined to plead such causes by authority, in which it would become me to appear by choice. Farewell.

LETTER XXX.

TO FABATUS.

WE have the highest reason, most certainly, to celebrate your birth-day as our own, since the felicity of ours is derived from you, to whose kind attentions it is owing that we are gay here, and at our ease in Rome.* Your Camilian villa in Campania† has suffered by the injuries of time, and is falling into decay; however, the most valuable parts of the building either remain entire, or are but slightly damaged, and I wait here to see it put into thorough repair. Though I flatter myself I have many friends, yet scarce any, I doubt, of the sort you enquire after, and which the affair you mention demands. All mine lie among those whose employments engage them in town; whereas the conduct of country business requires a person of a robust constitution, and inured to labour, who will not look upon the office as mean, and can submit to a solitary life. The opinion you have of Rufus is suitable to a person who was distinguished by the friendship of your son; but of what service he can be to us, upon the present occasion, I know not; though I am well persuaded he will rejoice to have it in his power to render us any. Farewell.

* There is great obscurity in the beginning of this letter, which none of the commentators have been able sufficiently to enlighten. The difficulty arises from its evidently referring to certain articles in a letter, which Fabatus, the grandfather of Calphurnia, Pliny's wife, had written to him, the purport of which can only be guessed.

† So called, because it formerly belonged to Camillus.

LETTER XXXI.

TO CORNELIANUS.

I RECEIVED lately the most exquisite satisfaction at Centemcellæ,* (as it is now called,) being summoned thither by Cæsar† to attend a *council.* Could any thing, indeed, afford a higher gratification, than to behold the emperor exhibiting not only his affability, but his justice and his wisdom, even in retirement, where those virtues are most observable? Various were the matters brought in question before him, and which proved, in so many different instances, the eminent abilities of the judge. The affair of Claudius Ariston came on first. He is an Ephesian nobleman, of great munificence and unambitious popularity; whose virtues have rendered him obnoxious to a set of people of far different characters; they had instigated an informer against him, of the same infamous stamp with themselves; but he was honourably acquitted. The next day the charge against Gallita, accused of adultery, was heard. Her husband, who is a military tribune, was upon the point of offering himself as a candidate for certain honours at Rome; but she had disgraced both him and herself by an intrigue with a centurian.‡ The husband informed the consul's lieutenant, who wrote to the emperor concern-

* Supposed to be *Civita Vecchia.* † Trajan.

‡ An officer in the Roman legions, somewhat resembling a captain in our companies.

ing it. Cæsar, having examined the proofs, broke the centurian, and sentenced him to banishment. It remained that some punishment should be inflicted, likewise, upon the other party, as it is a crime of which both must necessarily be equally guilty. But the husband's affection for his wife inclined him to drop that part of the prosecution, not without some suspicion of connivance; for he continued to live with her even after he had commenced his prosecution, contenting himself, it should seem, with having removed his rival. But he was ordered to proceed in the suit; and, though he complied with great reluctance, it was necessary, nevertheless, that she should be condemned. Accordingly, she was sentenced to the punishment ordained by the Julian law.* The emperor thought proper to specify, in his decree, the name and office of the centurian, that it might appear he passed it in virtue of military discipline; lest it should be imagined, he claimed a particular cognizance in every cause of the same nature. The third day was employed in examining an affair which had occasioned much and various speculation, relating to the will of Julius Tiro, part of which was plainly genuine, the other part, it was alleged, was forged. The persons accused of this fraud were Sempronius Senecio, a Roman knight, and Eurythmus, Cæsar's freedman and procurator.† The heirs jointly petitioned the

* This law was made by Augustus Cæsar; but it no where clearly appears what was the peculiar punishment it inflicted.

† An officer employed by the emperor to receive and regulate the public revenue in the provinces.

emperor, when he was in Dacia,* that he would reserve to himself the trial of this cause; to which he consented. At his return from that expedition, he appointed a day for the hearing; and when some of the heirs, as in respect to Eurythmus, offered to withdraw the suit, the emperor nobly replied, "He is not Polycletus,† nor am I Nero." However, he indulged the petitioners with an adjournment, and the time being expired, he now sat to hear the cause. Two of the heirs appeared, and desired that either their whole number might be compelled to plead, as they had all joined in the information, or that they also might have leave to desist. Cæsar delivered his opinion with great dignity and temper; and when the counsel, on the part of Senecio and Eurythmus, said, that unless they were heard in defence of their clients, the latter would remain under the suspicion of guilt: "I am not concerned," replied the emperor, "what suspicions *they* may lie under, 'tis *I* that am suspected;" and then turning to us who were of the council, "Advise me," said he, "how to act in this matter, for you see they complain, that I do not give them leave to withdraw their suit." At length, by the advice of the council, he ordered notice to be given to the heirs, that they should either go on with the cause, or each of them justify their reasons for withdrawing the charge; otherwise, that he would pass sentence upon them as calumniators.‡

* Comprehending Transylvania, Moldavia, and Walachia.

† Polycletus was a freedman, and great favourite of Nero.

‡ Memmius, or Rhemmius, (the critics are not agreed which,) was author of a law, by which it was enacted, That whosoever was

Thus you see in what honourable and important occupations we employed our time at Centumcellæ; which, however, was diversified with amusements of the most agreeable kind. We were every day invited to Cæsar's table, which, for so great a prince, was spread with much plainness and simplicity. There we were entertained either with interludes, or passed the night in the most pleasing conversation. When we took our leave of the emperor, he sent each of us presents; so studious is he, upon all occasions, to indulge the benevolence of his heart! As for myself, I was not only charmed with the dignity and wisdom of the judge, the honour done to his council, the ease and unreserved freedom of the conversation, but also with the agreeable situation of the place. This delightful villa is surrounded by the most verdant meadows, and commands a fine view of the sea, which flows into a spacious harbour in the form of an amphitheatre. The left-hand of this port is defended by exceeding strong works, and they are now actually employed in carrying on the same on the opposite side. An artificial island, which is rising in the mouth of the haven, will break the force of the waves, and afford a safe channel to ships on each side. In the construction of this wonderful instance of art, stones of a most enormous size are transported hither in a large sort of pontoons, and being piled one upon the other, are fixed by their own weight, and gradually accumulat-

convicted of calumny and false accusation, should be stigmatized with a mark in his forehead; and, by the law of the twelve tables, false accusers were to suffer the same punishment as would have been inflicted upon the person unjustly accused, if the crime had been proved.

ing in the manner of a natural mound. It already lifts its rocky back above the ocean, while the waves which beat upon it, being tossed to an immense height, foam with a prodigious noise, and whiten all the sea around. To these stones are added large blocks, which, when the whole shall be completed, will give it the appearance of an island just emerged from the ocean! This haven is to be called by the name of its great founder,* and will prove of infinite benefit, by affording a very secure retreat to ships on that extensive and dangerous coast. Farewell.

LETTER XXXII.

TO QUINCTILIAN.

THOUGH your desires, I know, are extremely moderate, and the education which your daughter† has received, is suitable to your fortune, and

* Trajan.

† This letter has been generally supposed to be addressed to the famous Quinctilian, author of that excellent treatise upon oratory, which is still extant. But there are very strong reasons to believe, that either there is some error in the title, or that it is addressed to another person of the same name. Quinctilian, in the opening of his sixth book, *De Inst. Orat.* takes occasion to mention his family, where he is lamenting to his friend Victorius the loss of his eldest son, which had just then happened. He takes notice, at the same time, of the deaths of his wife and younger son; and, after some very pathetic reflections, closes the whole with this observation:—"*Non miseri, sicut facultates patrimonii nostri, ita hoc opus* aliis *paramus*, aliis *relinquemus.*" This preface may be considered, then, as the register of his family. But he does not give the least hint of a daughter, which seems difficult to be accounted for upon any other reason, than that he never had one. For, if she was dead, it is highly natural to imagine, he

that of Tutilius her grandfather; yet, as she is going to be married to a person of such distinction as Nonius Celer, whose station requires a certain splendid mode of living, it will be necessary to consider the rank of her husband in her clothes and equipage; circumstances, which though they do not augment real dignity, yet certainly adorn and grace it. But as I am sensible your revenue is not equal to the greatness of your mind, I claim to myself a part of your expence, and, like another father, present the young lady with fifty thousand sesterces.* The sum should be larger, but that I am well persuaded the smallness of the present is the only consideration that can prevail with your modesty not to refuse it. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO ROMANUS.

THROW, throw your tasks aside! the sovereign said.† Thus, whether you are engaged in reading or writing, away with your books and papers, and take up my divine oration, as those Cyclops did the arms of Æneas. Now, tell me, could I introduce my speech to you with an air of more importance? But, in

would have deplored the loss of her among that of the rest of his children. If she was living, how could he lament the necessity of leaving his patrimony to *strangers?* or if she was unworthy of his tenderness, why does he not complain of that unhappiness among his other misfortunes?—Vid. *Traduct. de Quinct. par l'Abbé Gedoyn,* in the Preface.

* About L. 400 of our money.

† Æn. 8. Pitt's Trans. The speech of Vulcan to his Cyclops, when he directs them to prepare arms for Æneas.

good earnest, I put it into your hands as the best of *my* performances;* for it is myself only that I pretend to emulate. It was spoken in defence of Accia Variola; and the dignity of the person interested, together with the singularity of the occasion, and the majesty of the tribunal, conspired to render it extremely remarkable. Figure to yourself a lady, ennobled not only by her birth, but her marriage to a person of prætorian rank, disinherited by her father, and suing for her patrimony in the centumviral court, within eleven days after this old man, seized with a fit of love at fourscore years of age, had introduced a mother-in-law to his daughter. Imagine the solemnity of a court of justice, composed of one hundred and eighty judges, (for that is the number of which it consisted;) friends innumerable attending on both parties; the benches infinitely thronged, and a wide circle of people encompassing the judges, at the same time that numbers pressed round the tribunal; even the very galleries lined with men and women, hanging over with the greatest earnestness, (who, though they might see tolerably well, it was scarce possible for them to hear a word;) represent to yourself, in short, fathers, daughters, and mothers-in-law, all warmly interesting themselves in the event of this important trial. The opinions of the judges were divided, two of the courts being for us, and two against us. It is somewhat remarkable, that the same question, debated before the same judges, and pleaded by the same advocates, and at the same time, should

* Sidonius Apollinaris says, that Pliny acquired more honour by this speech, even than by his incomparable panegyric upon Trajan.

happen to receive so different a decision, that one would almost imagine it was more than accident.* However, in the final event, the mother-in-law, who claimed under the will a sixth-part of the inheritance, lost her cause. Suberinus† was also excluded his pretensions; who, though he had been disinherited by his father, and had not dared to vindicate his own patrimony, had yet the singular assurance to claim the effects of his father-in-law.

I have been thus particular in giving you a detail of the circumstances which attended this cause, not only that my letter might inform you of what you could not learn by my speech; but also (for I will honestly confess the artifice) in order to your reading it with more pleasure, by being thus introduced, as it were, into the audience. Complicated as this pleading is, I do not despair of its recommending itself to you, as much as if it had the grace of brevity. The abundance of matter; the just order in which it is arranged; the little narratives that are interspersed throughout; together with the several kinds of style which diversify the composition; will always give it an air of novelty. I will even venture to say to you (what I durst not to any one else) that a spirit of animated and sublime eloquence breaks out in many parts of it; as in others it as-

* It should seem, by this passage, that the centumviral court (consisting of 140 judges) was divided into four classes, each class sitting in their juridical capacity, upon the bench at the same time; and that, when the question concerned the validity of a testamentary devise, if these classes were equally divided in opinion, the claimant, under the will, lost the legacy.

† This Suberinus (the commentators suppose) was son to the woman whom Accia's father had married in his old age.

sumes the close and argumentative manner. I was frequently obliged to intermix dry computations with the elevated and pathetic, and to descend from the orator almost to the accountant; so that you will sometimes imagine the scene was changed from the solemnity of the centumviral tribunal, to the familiarity of a private consultation. I gave a loose to my indignation, my resentment, and my compassion; and, in steering through this illustrious cause, was governed by turns with every varying gust of the passions. In a word, my particular friends look upon this speech (and I will venture to repeat it again) as my best performance, esteeming it the *Ctesiphon** of my orations; whether with reason or not you will easily judge, who have them all so perfectly in your memory, as to be able, while you are reading it, to make the comparison, without the trouble of turning to my former speeches. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO MAXIMUS.

You were perfectly in the right to promise a combat of gladiators to our good friends the citizens of Verona;† not only as they have long distinguished you with their peculiar esteem and veneration, but as it was from that city you received the amiable object of your most tender affection, your late

* An oration of Demosthenes in defence of Ctesiphon, esteemed the best of that noble orator's speeches.

† In the territories of the republic of Venice.

excellent wife. And since you owed some honourable memorial, or public representation, to her memory, what other spectacle could you have exhibited more proper to the occasion?* Besides, you were so unanimously requested by the corporation, that to have refused, would have had the appearance rather of obstinacy than firmness. The readiness with which you granted their petition, and the magnificent† manner in which you executed the object of it, is much to your honour; for a greatness of soul is seen in these smaller instances, as well as in matters of higher moment. I am sorry the African panthers, which you had largely provided for this purpose, did not arrive time enough; but, though they were delayed by the tempestuous season, the obligation to you is equally the same, since it was not your fault that they were not exhibited. Farewell.

* It was an opinion which unhappily prevailed in the ancient pagan world, that the ghosts of the deceased were rendered propitious by human blood. This absurd and cruel notion gave rise to these barbarous gladiatorial combats, which, at first, were only exhibited at funeral obsequies, and none but criminals were appointed to those mortal encounters. But, in process of time, they became part of the public entertainments, and persons were trained up to the sole purpose of these inhuman shows.

† The amphitheatre, in which these shows were exhibited, is still to be seen in Verona; the inside whereof is the most entire of any ancient structure for the same purpose now existing. It is computed to have been sufficiently spacious to contain upwards of 23,000 spectators, to sit commodiously.—Vid. *Wright's Travels.*

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